

BSD Light Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Prologue, 1/3)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/145458292077/bsd-light-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era

A few things to start off: I'm translating this from the Chinese novels to English. Chinese is my mother tongue while English is my first language. I've had formal education, but understandably some things are lost in translation from Japanese > Chinese > English. I'll do my best to explain them, but please enjoy this with a teaspoon of salt. I try to keep to the original intent as much as English grammar will allow, but the gist is more or less there. For this part, I haven't had much trouble other than one part, which I've added a postscript note for.

Please don't hesitate to shoot me an ask if anything sounds wrong or looks weird! If anyone wants to proofread these for me I'd be eternally grateful. I'm doing these at my own pace, so if anyone wishes to help out just let me know, I'd be more than happy to join forces.

Without further ado.

Prologue

As though having heard someone's calls, I head towards the bar.

It is already 11pm in the night. The gas lamps float along either side of the street, ghost-like. I hurriedly cross the streets to distance myself from them, entering through the bar's doors. Lungs filled with the smoke permeating the premises, I walked down the steps and spotted Dazai sitting at the counter, playing with a glass with his fingers. This guy spends half his time here. He orders a drink but doesn't touch it, just stares at it solemnly.

"Ah, Odasaku!" Dazai happily waves towards me.

I wave back in return and sit beside Dazai. The bartender doesn't ask a word, placing my usual glass of alcoholic beverage before me.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"Thinking. Thinking about some philosophical questions."

"What kind of questions?"

Dazai paused for a moment, then replied, "Success is harder than failure for many things in this world, right?"

"That's right," I replied.

"That means I shouldn't place suicide as my goal, but rather, attempted suicide! It may be harder to succeed at suicide, but to fail at attempted suicide should be easier! Am I right or not?"

I stared at my drink for a while.

"You have a point."

"Exactly! I found it! Let's test it out - boss, is there laundry detergent on the menu?"

"There isn't," the bartender replied lazily as he wiped glasses.

"What about carbonate laundry detergent?"

"There isn't."

"To think there isn't..."

"Then there's nothing we can do about it," I nodded.

I surveyed the shop's interior surroundings again.

The bar is in the basement, hence, there are no windows. As quiet as a bear cave, the bar is well stocked - the counter, seats, walls lined with rows and rows of empty bottles, taciturn regulars, the bartender in his red vest. Because so many things have been squeezed into this tight underground space, the walking space only allows for two people to squeeze past one another. The items in the shop have witnessed the passage of time, giving guests the feeling of being suspended in their time.

I took a sip of my drink and ask Dazai, "Seeing that you're pondering such philosophical things, could it be that you failed your mission?"

"You got that right. It's not just any failure, it's an utter failure!"

Dazai purses his lips.

"We were luring the enemy to fight. Everything started because we got hold of information about a bunch of foolish idiots planning to destroy and steal some shipments of illegal goods. The nerve, stealing our livelihood, these people must be tired of living. I was lying in wait eagerly, wondering what kind of brave soldiers would they be. If we had succeeded, I could have perished magnificently. Pity that it turned out to be ten or so unremarkable ruffians. The only thing worth noting was that they came with a machine gun on their truck and a bazooka. I was really disappointed. once we had them surrounded in our trap, those losers ran off crying. It's all their fault, I didn't manage to die. How boring."

I figured as much. I can't imagine this guy ever failing.

"What group were those guys from?"

"Those energetic guys in our squad caught a few trying to escape and are being held prisoner in the interrogation room. They should be spilling any moment now."

To be unafraid of being punished by the cruel Port Mafia, the other party are indeed brave soldiers. Dazai looks disappointed. But to have prepared a machine gun and a bazooka, they may perhaps be more than a bunch of fools.

Too bad the one they had to meet with was Dazai.

There is a saying in the Port Mafia: "The misfortune of Dazai's enemies is to have Dazai as their enemy." If Dazai so wished, he could have a picnic in the middle of a crossfire. *This man was born to be a mafioso.*

Underground organisation Port Mafia Executive - Dazai Osamu.

This man who looks more like a teen carries the title of "mafia executive". People who don't know any better may laugh it off as a joke.

However, if they were to see Dazai's records - records stained with blood and darkness - they wouldn't be able to laugh any more. Half of the Port Mafia's profits in the past two years can be attributed to Dazai. The millions these profits amount to and the number of lives lost as a result - as a trivial member, it is beyond my imagination.

Of course, glory cannot be attained without a price.

"Your wounds have increased." I take another sip of my drink, pointing to the new bandages on Dazai's body.

"It has indeed increased," he laughed, inspecting his own body.

Dazai's entire body is littered with the scars of that price.

Simply put, his whole body has wounds. Dazai's body seems to be perpetually bandaged up. It dawns upon me that Dazai breathes, exists in a place centred around violence and death.

"How did your leg get hurt?" I pointed to the bandages, thinking that it must be the result of some violent fight.

"I was reading a book titled 'How to Prevent Accidental Injuries' while walking when I accidentally fell into a ditch."

I wasn't expecting such an abnormal response.

"What about the wound on your hand?"

"I was speeding on a mountaintop when I fell into a precipice."

"Then, the bandage on your forehead is...?"

"I was trying out this suicide method of hitting one's head on the corner of tofu*."

"You injured yourself when you hit tofu?" If this was true, this dear friend of mine must have a serious lack of calcium.

"For the sake of making super sturdy tofu, I started to formulate a few methods. Using salt to reduce water content, putting a really heavy object inside... all in my own kitchen. The tofu I make is hard enough to use to hit nails in. I am now more knowledgeable than anyone when it comes to the tofu-making process.

When it comes to making tofu amongst the mafia executives, they are very particular about the process. As one of the five mafia executives, he's on a different level altogether.

"So how did that tofu taste?"

"The worst part," Dazai's face looks bitter and unwilling, "If you slice it and dip it in soy sauce, it's very delicious."

"To think it was delicious..." I could help but to hold him in admiration. As a person, it seems like no matter what Dazai does, he always produces outstanding results.

"Let me try some next time."

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*I had to Google this one, apparently there's a Japanese saying 「豆腐の角に頭をぶつけて死ぬ」: hit your head on the corner of tofu and you'll die! which is ridiculous also basically means if you die from hitting your head on tofu you're weak af what the fuck dazai

[June 6th \(457\)](#)

BSD Light Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Prologue, Part 2/3)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/145502792857/bsd-light-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era

I'm making fair progress through these, so rejoice! you should be able to expect one part every one/two days. I'll update as I go along.

Also please thank [@nakaharachuyaa](#) for proofreading this! Otherwise it'd be in shambles lmao. I'll look into setting up a masterpost and whatnot as the number of chapters increase. As usual, please don't hesitate to drop me a note if anything looks funny or if you'd like to clarify anything, and enjoy!

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"Odasaku-san... you should have ridiculed him just now."

A voice comes from the doorway. I turn my head. A scholarly young man is walking down the steps.

"Odasaku-san, you spoil Dazai. If you don't ridicule him every now and then, there'll be no end to it. Look, the entire bar has become a different space. Even the boss is trembling."

His name is Sakaguchi Ango. The new guest dons a suit and rounded glasses. Although he is dressed like a scholar, he is also one of our colleagues. Ango is the mafia's special intelligence agent.

"Ango! Long time no see. You look well," Dazai beams as he raises his hand in greeting.

"Do I look well? I just came back from a trip to Tokyo. To and fro in a day. My entire body feels like a crumpled piece of waste newspaper. I'm exhausted," Ango rotates his neck and takes the seat beside Dazai, placing the red satchel on his shoulder onto the table. "Boss, the usual."

As Ango sits, the owner pushes a glass of golden fluid towards him. It looks like he started preparing it when he heard Ango's footsteps. Bubbles rise in the glass, shimmering faintly.

"Travelling is so fun, I want to go play too. Boss, give me another can of crabmeat," Dazai says as he twirls the empty can. There are already three similar cans placed in front of him.

"Travel to play? There are very few people in the mafia who live to kill time like you, Dazai. I went to work."

"If it were up to me, Ango," Dazai pinches crabmeat from a new can with his fingers and remarks, "Everything in the world is a prop used to kill time in a journey towards death. So, what was the job?"

Ango's gaze lingers for a moment, before he replies, "I went fishing."

"Ehhh, that must have been tough. What did you fish?"

"Nothing. It was a wasted trip. They said there was top notch cargo shipped from Europe. I rushed over to see but it all turned out to be junk you'd find in a neighbourhood craft workshop."

"Fishing" is a code word used frequently in the mafia, referring to the acquisition of smuggled goods. In many scenarios, the acquired are overseas manufactured weapons and resale goods. Occasionally there are expensive stones or art pieces.

"However, this time, there was a nice antique watch, the work of a late Medieval era watch craftsman. It's a fake but

done exquisitely - someone should be picking it up," Ango takes a small box out from its paper wrapping to show us. On top of the box are an umbrella and cigarettes, items used for travel.

"...What time did the exchange end?" Dazai asks suddenly, looking over Ango's possessions.

"8pm. I rushed over here without a moment to play," Ango laughs bitterly before he adds, "Do as much work as you are paid. This way, I won't lose my head."

"When did the famous 'He who knows all about the Port Mafia' Sakaguchi Ango become so soft?" Dazai teases.

As the mafia's intelligence agent, Ango acts as the messenger of classified information with other organisations. He doesn't belong to any particular faction. Abiding only the leader's orders, he handles where and when transactions take place, reports of alliances between other organisations, internal private communications, mediating betrayals of mafia members, various highly confidential reports; a secret agent. Practically all these precious reports that determine the mafia's development go through Ango to be handed over to the leader.

Of course, Ango has information on the mafia that is more precious than gold. To prevent the possibility of information being leaked by enemy interrogation, this responsibility must be given to someone who is unafraid of punishment and is mentally resilient.

"Compared to 'Youngest Executive in Mafia History', my achievements are nothing but a graduate's resume. Speaking of which, what did you two want to discuss today?"

"What do you say, Odasaku?"

I answer for Dazai, "No, I just incidentally bumped into Dazai here, nothing more." This is fairly regular occurrence.

"Is that so? I had a feeling I would meet you guys tonight, so I couldn't help but to come over." As though finding his words amusing, Dazai started to smile.

"Do you have some business to look for us?"

"Not really. Just thought that this is like any other night, is all," Dazai remarks, knocking at the glass with his nail.

I can understand what Dazai isn't saying out loud. Usually, we gather at this bar as though we are running away from something. Talking and sharing with one another about superficial topics into the deep night.

Somehow, the three of us frequently meet at this bar. Despite the fact that we are in the same organisation, Dazai is an executive, Ango is an intelligence agent, and I am a low ranked operative with no title. It wouldn't be surprising if we didn't even know each other's names, let alone drink together. But to be able to be like this, to discard our ranks and ages to listen to one another, is probably because there are too many differences between our areas of jurisdiction.

"Speaking of which," Dazai speaks, focusing on the empty space, "We've been drinking together like this for a while now, but we've never heard Odasaku complaining about work before."

"You're right. It's different from what Dazai or I do. What Odasaku-san's job entails is a little special."

"There's nothing special about it," I shake my head, "It's just simply not worth talking about. You'll find it boring."

"Trying to shuffle past it again," Dazai tilts his head rather unhappily, "Seriously, amongst the three of us, the one with the most interesting job is Odasaku. Hurry up and spill. What have you done this whole week?"

I took a moment to recollect, counting down on my fingers and replied, "I went to investigate a theft case concerning one of the mafia's malls. In the end, the culprit were a bunch of grade schoolers from a nearby school. One of the

members said they'd lost a gun. When I searched their house, I found it in their rice cooker. The director of some company down under fell into some trouble* with their wife, so I ran to arbitrate that. On top of that, I had to handle a small bomb threat behind the mafia's building."

"Odasaku, I'm honestly begging you, do you want to swap jobs with me?" Dazai asked, his eyes lighting up.

"I don't think that's possible."

"To come into contact with a small bomb threat! Do you hear that, Ango? Why is it that Odasaku gets to take all the interesting jobs? It's absolutely unfair! Tomorrow, I'm going straight to the boss to tell him, if he doesn't let me handle bomb threats, I'm going to resign as an executive!"

If other executives were to hear this, they might faint over immediately with angered expressions. As though used to it, Ango casually echoed, "Makes sense."

I may be a part of the mafia, but the underworld jobs entrusted to me are the dirty work no one wants to do. The reason is simple. Because I have no spectacular rank nor achievements, and neither am I considered a part of any executive's squad. These silly jobs are easily pushed onto me.

Simply put, I'm the yorozuya** of the mafia.

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* しゅらば, which apparently means shambles so I'm assuming this means Wife Problems, extramarital affairs, etc.

** Yorozuya (万事屋) which basically means the errand boy. It's a Japanese term, but the literal translation means "house of 10,000 businesses".

[June 6th \(188\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Prologue, Part 3/3)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/145510039927/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-prologue

That's a wrap for the prologue! It's fairly short but it's enough pain, I hope.

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I definitely don't do this job because I like it. A few days ago, while being angrily scolded by the director's wife and mistress, I seriously considered suicide by biting my tongue. The only reason I am in such a position and job is because I am incapable of anything else.

As to why that is the case—

"At the very least, bring me along next time! I'll do my best not to get in your way."

"I can't agree with that," Ango narrows his eyes at Dazai, "Let's not talk about investigations or finding lost property. Situations that involve handling interpersonal disputes - Dazai will only make things worse."

"Disputes that become worse because of me... how wonderful."

"You see?"

Unable to rebut Ango's reminder, I solemnly sipped my drink.

"Dazai, before interfering with other people's work, how about finding a new interest. Maybe something a little healthier than suicide."

"A new interest," Dazai's face of youth lights up, "But things like English chess and *go* are too simple, they're boring. What else is there?"

"Something sports-related?"

"I dislike things that'll wear me out."

"Intensive study?"

"Troublesome."

"Then cooking... no, forget I said that."

Ango cuts his speech halfway and hurriedly covers his mouth. He must have remembered the time Dazai invited us to taste his special "spirited chicken hotpot". Its taste was true to its name - it could boost one's spirits instantaneously, but we can't forget the next couple of days, where we completely lost all our energy. Later, we asked what he put in it, but he merely smiled, refusing to speak.

"Oh yes, I recently came up with a new chicken hotpot recipe, may I invite you two to taste it some day? It's name is "superhuman strength hotpot" - After eating it, you can run for hours without feeling tired, like you're in a dream..."

"Absolutely not!" Ango curtly rejected him.

"Won't feel tired, huh... It'd be best to eat some before work."

"...Odasaku-san, didn't I just say, if you don't ridicule him when you have to, there'll be no end to Dazai's nonsense."

So this is what Ango meant. The more you know.

"Boss, do you have a hammer?"*

"No."

"You don't..."

"Then there's nothing to do about it," Dazai replies with a laugh.

"Really... Work has just ended and my head's already starting to hurt." Ango groans.

It looks like his job is very tiring.

"You're overworked, Ango."

"Work is overworking me."

Ango glares back at me and Dazai and says, "It's as you say."

"It looks like I shouldn't be here working overtime for free. I'll be taking my leave."

"Eh? You're leaving already?" Dazai asks, disappointed.

Ango doesn't smile, "Frankly speaking, everytime I come here to drink with you two, I forget I am part of an underworld organisation, committing illegal activities. Thank you for the service, boss."

Ango picks up his baggage from the counter and stands.

"Do you use that bag to travel?" I ask, pointing to his briefcase. I wasn't actually thinking about much. I just couldn't find a better excuse for him to stay.

"Yes, but it's not for anything special. Cigarettes, an umbrella, and a few tools for self defense." Ango opens his brief for me to see. "There's also a camera for work."

"That's it, let's take a picture!" Dazai bursts out suddenly, "As a commemoration!"

"Commemorate what?" I ask.

"To commemorate the three of us gathering here today? Or Ango's return from his travels, successfully handling that bomb threat, whatever reason's fine!"

"Yes, executive, sir." Ango shrugs his shoulders, drawing out the black camera from his brief. It's a vintage film camera. It's already very old - the black paint is starting to peel at several parts.

"Take a handsome one."

Ango laughs bitterly, taking a photo of me and Dazai together. Dazai also requests for me to take a photo of the two of them sitting beside one another. "Shooting from this angle will make you look more handsome," Dazai says as he places his feet on the barstools, leaning back.

"Dazai, why the sudden urge to take photos?"

"I don't know. I just feel like if we don't take a picture now, there won't be another chance for us to leave behind evidence that we used to come here together," Dazai smiles.

Yet, these words were like a prophecy. That day would be the day we lost something unknown between us - It is something felt only after the loss passes through the emptiness in our hearts, left upon these photos.

In the end, there would never be a second chance for us to take photos in that bar.

...

Because not too long after, one of us bade farewell to this world forever.

End of Prologue

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*from your proofreader [@nakaharachuyaa](#): It turns out that you can get medicinal use hammers (which aren't actually hammers, they sort of look like rubbery/plastic-y hairbrushes) which you can use to hit yourself on the head to stimulate blood flow and reduce headaches

I reiterate again that I've never seen Dazai so smiley and happy and it pains my soul

[June 6th \(192\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 1, 1/9)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/145560340642/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

I returned to a hundred new guys following this. Thank you so much for the support! As usual, drop me an ask if you spot any hiccups.

Chapter 1

The Port Mafia has three rules. In order of importance, they are “Always obey the Leader’s commands”, “Do not betray the organization”, and “Attacks received must be returned doubly”.

Which is why when I receive a summoning call from the leader that morning while brewing coffee, the bread in my mouth dropped to the ground.

The request from the phone is emotionless, “Sakunosuke Oda, the leader is looking for you.” In that moment, three words came to my mind: “used up”, “useless goods”, and “personnel adjustments”. Holding the receiver, my fingertips go numb from the cold.

Hanging up the phone, I swiftly stuff the bread into my mouth. I cut the Canadian bacon and American fried eggs into three equal portions and hastily swallow them into my belly. I pour the freshly brewed coffee into a mug, add sugar and evaporated milk.

While hurriedly changing into a shirt, I finish the very hot coffee in one gulp. The scalding hot water burns my brain, and I momentarily forget any foolish ideas of fleeing Yokohama towards an unknown land. Shave my beard, put on trousers. Fastened leather straps upon my shoulders. Secured 9mm pistols into both left and right holsters. Slipped on a jacket and headed out of the door.

I drive at full speed towards the firm. I don’t have any strong recollection of what happened on the way. I only remember speeding over the highway limit twice or thrice.

I make it to the office alive. Walking into the main lobby, I greet my colleagues on guard and squeeze into the elevator heading for the top floor. Be it the European-decorated luxury hotel lobby or the swift moving elevator, everything is spotless with no trace of fingerprints.

The mafia’s headquarters sits in the heart of Yokohama’s city center. There are four other similarly sized office buildings. Looking out from the glass elevator, the entire city is within view. Skyscrapers taller than oneself sink until they become nothing before my eyes. The elevator continues to ascend.

Watching the office buildings beneath my feet bathed in the golden morning light, I wonder why the leader summoned for me.

Thinking about calmly, if it was just to “handle” a lower ranked staff, there wouldn’t be a need to call me to his office on the topmost floor. If he wanted to silence his subordinate permanently, he only needed to call me to a landfill, kill me, and hand it over to cleaners to handle the rest. This way, it saves money and effort. Compared to the previous leaders of the Port Mafia, the current leader is more logical, especially when it comes to protecting the environment.

If that is the case, why would the leader call for me, a nameless pawn?

The elevator doors open suddenly, interrupting my train of thought. Walking out of the elevator, the wide corridors are lined with carpets that can muffle the sound of footsteps and walls sturdy enough to withstand rocket propelled grenades. Cove lights illuminate the entire corridor, immersing it in a soft, pure whiteness, making it such that people

cannot discern the light's presence.

Upon reporting my name to the suited guard standing outside the office, he raises his finger and points to the door behind him.

Standing before the double glass doors, I lower my head and inspect my outfit, touching my cleanly shaven jaw. Clearing my throat, as though delivering a sermon in a church of God, I declare, "Leader. It's Oda, I'm coming in."

"Come, Elise, how about you wear this dress? Just for a bit, for a little while! Just for a second!"

...Suspicious words come from within the office.

I wait three seconds, adjust my breathing, pretending as though I heard nothing. "Leader. It's Oda, I'm coming in."

"Aaa, good, just like that, take off your clothes. Don't drop them on the ground, that's an expensive dress.

...I hear some unsettling words. Hesitating for a moment, I decide that I should play an ignorant subordinate who chose to open the door at the wrong time.

"Pardon me."

I push open the twin doors and the spacious office opens before my eyes, as well as two people chasing one another. One is a middle aged man dressed in white, the other, a girl around ten years of age. The girl is half naked, whereas this middle aged male is the leader of the Port Mafia.

"No, no way!"

"Please, Elise-chan, try it on, alright? I picked this one out super carefully. Look at the beautiful deep red floral pattern! They're like a beautiful bouquet, they'd definitely suit you!"

"It's not pretty dresses I hate but Rintarou's desperation!"

"This doesn't come by often, okay? Look, I've caught you now!"

"Leader."

Hearing my voice, the two people turn their heads, smiles from before frozen on their faces, unmoving.

"As per your instruction, I am here to receive orders. Do you have something important for me?"

The leader's smile doesn't fade, intently staring at me. It is the gaze of a person begging for help. Begging me for help will only make things difficult for me, though.

"May I ask if you have something important, leader?"

"Ah... that..."

The leader's gaze flicks from the tables, lights on the ceiling, paintings, candlesticks, and finally comes back to rest on the young girl beside him, "What's the matter?"

"I don't know."

The girl named "Elise" glares at the leader like she's seen trash on the streets, opening a door to the adjacent room and walking in, leaving me at my original position to await my next orders.

The leader surveys the surroundings again before he moves behind the desk in the center of the office and presses

a button. Glass windows displaying a endless view of Yokohoma is hidden instantly, turning into a grey wall. The interior of the room darkens considerably. Just as the leader takes a seat in the leather office chair, two guards appear from nowhere, wordlessly standing behind the boss. The lamp on the mahogany table illuminates the leader's face - his narrow eyes, slightly knitted eyebrows, elbows on the table, arms crossed. He speaks with a low but penetrating voice.

“—Now then...”

“Yes.”

“Oda-kun, I didn't call you over for anything else.” The leader's sharp gaze cuts through the darkness.

“Yes.”

“...Oda-kun.” The leader pauses, before continuing, “Has anyone ever told you to ‘ridicule others more’?”*

How does the leader know about this? “It happens often.” My gaze falls on the two suited guards behind the leader, searching for a reason. My colleagues stand staunchly, expressionless, deliberately avoiding my confused gaze.

“Regardless, you have just entered and saw nothing. Understood?”

“Understood.” I nod. Indeed, I just entered, and saw nothing. “I entered not too long ago. Leader, you stopped your dress-up chasing game with a young girl to talk business with me, for which I am eternally grateful. What important business do you have for me?”

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*I've been scratching my head over this 'ridicule others more' - Ango mentions it and now Mori so I've been like ??? Apparently, the appropriate phrase is probably tsukkomi, from boke & tsukkomi, which is basically a Japanese gag style of bantering between a smart guy and a dumb guy, pretty much. 'Ridicule' is probably the best word at the moment I can supply. If anyone wants to suggest anything better for 吐槽, please let me know in my ask or drop me a message to discuss this darn language with me, Imao.

[June 7th \(219\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 1, 2/9)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/145564784189/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Surprise! No guarantees the rest of the chapters will come this fast. Consider this a thanks for the surge of support. Scan by @akutagawaprizе (all scans [here](#))

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The leader pinches between his eyebrows, deep in thought. As though having thought something through, he nods, "Executive Dazai once told me, "Odasaku is a man who says what he means. Although hard to get along with at the beginning, but once you get used to him, he has the power to heal." ...I'm starting to understand what he meant."

This is the first time I've heard such a comment. Although, it *is* Dazai - he must be talking nonsense. I'm already over 20, how can I heal others?

The leader clears his throat, as though snuffing out the happy atmosphere. "Now then, back to business proper."

He picks up a silver cigar box on the table, looking it over, then extracting a cigar from within to toy with. He doesn't light it.

"I'd like you to look for someone."

"Look for someone?" I let these words linger in my mind for a long time. I'm lucky he doesn't want me to die on the spot, however, it is still too early to be relieved. "Please let me ascertain a few matters. Leader, you summoned me here to personally make this request, which means the person to be found is no ordinary man. Will it be enough to entrust success of such a task to an ordinary member like me?"

"That's a very good question," the leader smiles slightly. "Someone of your rank would normally be on the frontlines of battle to be a human shield or tasked with the job of charging into a military police station armed with a bomb. However, from the remarks I've heard of you, I thought I should let you take this job."

Upon finishing, he places the cigar back into the cigar box, pulling back his bangs.

"Because the one who has gone missing is intelligence agent Sakaguchi Ango."

If there was someone who could look into my heart, they would be lucky to see the image of a majestic, erupting volcano. Countless question marks burst forth from the volcano's mouth, filling the air.

In reality, I curl my fingers a little.

"How calm. If you were panicked beyond belief, I'd have been worried that you wouldn't be suitable to look for the missing person... Not bad. Let me explain. Ango has been uncontactable since last night. There have been no signs that he returned home. It's not clear if he disappeared of his own accord or was abducted by someone."

That means Ango disappeared last night after he bade us farewell at the bar. He wasn't acting suspiciously at the bar, at least.

At that time, Ango had definitely said he wanted to go home.

If he had been lying, Dazai or I would have noticed. We probably would have noticed.

"As you know, Ango is the mafia's intelligence agent," the leader sighs worriedly. His worry for a missing

subordinate's safety is written plainly across his face. At least, that is how I see it. "His head is filled with various highly classified information about the mafia, such as our bill management, our annual corporation expenses, namelists of our corporate managers, contacts of our regular good smugglers. Selling this information to other organisations would indeed amount to a grand sum. He could completely expose our Achilles heel and make us suffer. Even if we ignore these possibilities, Ango is my most important and esteemed subordinates. If anything happens to him, I definitely wish to help him – can you understand my feelings?"

There are probably too many differences between the head of an entire organization and a mere operative like me to understand. "Of course," I agree anyway.

The leader picks up the quill on the table, turning it in his fingers. "There have been rumours that you're good at such troublesome cases. In a mafia full of people who only know how to shoot guns and use violence to threaten people, someone like you is hard to come by. I have faith in you."

The leader's misconceptions about me begin to surface. I am no professional at finding people, just a rookie. Although one can say that cases of this sort do end up falling upon me, but that is simply because I am a mafioso who cannot "shoot guns and use violence to threaten people".

Oda Sakunosuke

*Assist the aforementioned without asking further questions so that he may complete his investigation calmly and with composure.**

Ogai

"With this, investigating in the mafia should be easier. Take it."

I accept the paper. This piece of paper is known as "Silver Oracle", the so-called "transfer of authority". The words of its bearer are equivalent to that of the leader. Other than the five executives, anyone who sees this paper is free to be ordered. To defy it is to betray the mafia and to accept due punishment.

The article only spoken of in rumours rests in my hands. Somehow, it feels unreal and hard to believe.

"With this, even if the other party is an executive, you can arrogantly boss them around," the leader says with a laugh, "Speaking of which, you and Executive Dazai are secretly friends, hmm? A friendship that disregards one's rank... Regardless, he is an outstanding man. If you have any difficulties, you should look for him."

"I have no plan to do so," I reply. This is the truth.

"Really? The title of "Youngest Executive in History" isn't something earned by bluffing. Even though he is a troublesome heretic in the eyes of his colleagues, his abilities are outstanding. For all you know, in four or five years, he may be able to kill me and sit on this chair." A wicked grin appears on the leader's face.



My expression does not shift, but my heart threatens to leap out of shock. I stare at the leader, but I cannot read any meaning from his smiling expression. Was that a joke?

"I look forward to good news."

As the leader places his quill back on its stand, I bow and turn towards the doors.

My throat feels oddly parched.

Facing the endless bout of happenings, something doesn't feel right in my mind. But if I were asked what this feeling is, it only becomes harder to explain, like an old mole growing on one's back.

"Oda-kun."

As I prepared to leave, the leader calls from behind.

"The two pistols under your arms are a nice model."

I look down at the two pistols stowed in the leather gun holsters under my jacket.

"They're already antiques, but I'm used to them. I'm honoured to hear your praise."

"The next question is just my own curiosity, I can't help but to ask, there's a rumour that you've never used that gun to kill anyone before?"

I nod, "It's true." There is no point lying.

"And the reason for that?"

Before I answer this question, I need a few seconds to adjust my breathing.

"Are you asking this question as the leader of the organisation?" I ask.

"No, it's just my personal need to know."

"In that case, please allow me to not answer."

Although it was just for a moment, the leader's eyes widened, looking somewhat taken aback. After which, he crossed his arms and smiled at me, like a teacher looking at a student with poor grades, unable to do anything about it.

"Is that so. Well, run along now. I look forward to your good news."

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*The original translation reads: 此人以泰然自若的举止，势如破竹地解决纷扰诸事。不容置喙，应立即提供协助。 which is too poetic to be translated literally because there's an idiom in there talking about the strength to break bamboo and what not. I'm not sure.

Again, please thank [@nakaharachuyaa](#) for looking this over and helping with taking apart that note jfc mori this is why no one likes you

[June 8th \(180\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 1, 3/9)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/145687005387/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Just an update! I've gone through the previous chapters and made minor edits because of different phrasings. In part 2, I thought it was Odasaku parroting Dazai, but it was Ango and Dazai talking, apparently. Other than that, most of the content is true to the novel. Translating from the book is a lot more difficult, so expect updates to be slower.

Feel free to let me know if you spot any errors! As usual, much thanks to [@nakaharachuyaa](#) for proofreading.

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At the same time, Dazai is by the harbour.

Walking from the Port of Yokohama along the coast for ten minutes, one will arrive in a warehouse district surrounded by people. Small vessels with the numbers on their hulls faded, stolen cars from all around the world, and large machines used for manufacturing large-scale explosives are parked here. Without special permission, the police, let alone ordinary citizens, cannot enter as they please. This patch of land is managed by various illegal organisations, with the Port Mafia at the top.

This morning, three bodies have been washed up upon the shore.

“Go handle the reports quickly. Don't let the news slip into the police's hands. Contact the cleaning squad to clear the bodies.”

At the scene of the bodies, several men in black work silently. They are all members of the Port Mafia. Even the members who are street rats listen to their orders and truck along with expressionless faces.

There are two reasons for this. The first being that the bodies washed up are their colleagues, members of the Port Mafia. The second is considering the time and severity of the situation, one of the five executives will come by to inspect.

“Go investigate if the deceased had any family members. If there are...” The mafioso directing work at the scene pauses, “Leave the explaining to me.”

The one directing the scene is a senior mafioso. With a head of white hair, cigar poised between his lips, black coat and suit, he gives off an air of an elderly gentleman. One of the mafia's veterans – Hirotsu Ryurou.

Hirotsu draws out a golden pocketwatch and checks the time, “The executive will be arriving soon. Before that, tidy everything up.”

“Good morning everyone~!”

Just as Hirotsu issues the instruction, a cheerful greeting comes from amongst the crowd. Everyone at the scene looks over nervously.

The young man no older than a teen appears. His head of unkempt hair, neck, and arms are all covered in bandages. He walks over with a spring in his step. This person is one of the five executives of the Port Mafia, Dazai Osamu.

Hirotsu quickly extinguishes his cigar and tosses it into the cigar box in his breast pocket. All the people in suits raise a hand to their chest, the highest form of respect.

“Hold on, I’m currently on the hardest part—Shit, I’ve been overtaken! Take this! Tch, you actually managed to dodge!”

Dazai plays his handheld video game as he walks. His entire person is intently focused on the screen, and his gait is unsteady. If there was a small step in front, he would fall face first.

“Aaah, really! There’s no way to win this! This sharp bend is especially hard to manoeuvre – every time I pass through here— Aah! I’ve been passed again!”

“Dazai-san.” Hirotsu greets apprehensively in place of the subordinates, who are at a loss for words, “Apologies for the trouble taken to come out here. The victims are the security guards of our weapons store. As for the details—“

“Now that you mention it, it’s been a long time since someone has been brave enough to pry with our weapons store! How were they killed?” Dazai asks, completely focused on his game.

“All three took 10 to 20 shots of 9mm bullets and died on the spot. The firearms in the store were stolen. Specifically, we lost 40 automatic pistols, 8 shotguns, 2 sniper rifles, 80 hand grenades, and 18 kilograms of explosives. The electronic lock at the entrance were opened with the right passwords. As for how the information was leaked, we’re still investiga—“

“I’ll go take a look. I’m leaving this to you.”

“Eh?”

Dazai shoves the handheld game into Hirotsu’s hands, leaving him stunned.

“The trick is using the speed boost when you turn towards the finish line. Now then, where’s the body?”

“Yes... that, they’re all placed over there. M-May I ask, how do you press the button—“

Hirotsu raises the handheld video game in confusion while Dazai walks towards the bodies, spring in his step.

The three bodies are placed in a row. All three are in sunglasses suited, built and healthy men – well, until yesterday. Their skin has swelled from floating in the sea for a few hours, but the corpses are not as horrifying a sight as they would be if they had died by drowning. When they were tossed into the sea, the blood from their wounds had already poured out of their unconscious bodies, sinking into the depths of the sea.

“Hmm—“ Dazai looks over the corpses indifferently.

“They didn’t even take the weapons from the holsters, how pointless. Also... the bullets went right through the body. Judging from the number of bullets, it should have been a submachine gun fired at close range. To have come into such close proximity without being detected, the enemy’s hand isn’t half bad. I’m starting to get excited. What about the camera footage?” Dazai turns to ask Hirotsu. Instead, the other man is disappointedly staring at the game, head lowered. The videogame screen displays a mangled car body.

“It’s too shameful...” Hirotsu mutters.

Dazai looks at him in surprise, as though having forgotten that he had handed the game to him.

“Hirotsu-san,” Dazai narrows his eyes.

“That... if you can give me one more chance, I definitely can...” Hirotsu tries to explain, gripping the handheld game.

“It’s best to get rid of subordinates who are causing problems because of drugs,” Dazai suddenly says, providing no context.

“Drugs?” The colour drains from Hirotsu’s face. “No, no one touches that stuff. The subordinates as well... my subordinates are exemplary as well...”

“The gun holstered at your waist,” Dazai points to Hirotsu.

Hirotsu quickly moves to cover the gun out of reflex.

“Hirotsu-san doesn’t have the habit of carrying a gun, huh. Moreover, you’re a very cautious person when it comes to weapons, you wouldn’t randomly stick it on your belt. Which means that this is neither yours nor goods. Considering the condition that it’s been kept in, this should be your subordinate’s. Am I right?”

Hirotsu doesn’t reply. Dazai continues, “Hirotsu-san, as a commander of a hundred, you have at least 20 or so subordinates under you. Was this gun borrowed from your subordinate. Unlikely. At this early hour, there aren’t cases that require the use of guns. This gun was confiscated. The evidence would be the white powder and blood stains left on the handle. But there are no traces of these on Hirotsu-san’s clothes. But there are heavy eyebags under your eyes. From this, we can infer that your subordinates were involved in some drug disputes. Last night, you caught them and confiscated their weapons because you didn’t know what they’d done.”

“That is—“ Hirotsu’s voice goes hoarse as he tries to explain, but Dazai interrupts him.

“Hirotsu-san, your subordinates violated the mafia’s regulations. The drug industry may reap great benefits, but it’ll only attract trouble. The Special Ability Department, narcotics bureau, and the military police’s anti-organization surveillance committee will be lying in wait for us to make a blunder, using this excuse to report us to the government. It’s not enough to just confiscate their weapons.”

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BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 1, 4/9)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/145733297642/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Please thank your proofreaders [@nakaharachuyaa](#) and [@mlntyoonqi](#) who i will hereon refer to as “double kat” the proofreading duo who destroy my translating errors while i slumber at night

We also hit over 200 followers yesterday so again, thank you for the support!

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“But...”

“Hirotsu-san. Although I don’t quite understand your reasons, executives are put up there for a reason. Once you become an executive, even if you don’t like it, you’ll have subordinates beneath you. Using these useless idiots to succeed isn’t my thing. I dispose any good-for-nothings. You should take care of them.”

“...Extremely sorry,” Hirotsu chokes out the words.

In the world of the mafia, “take care of” is synonymous with a death sentence. If one does not obey the orders of executives and higher ups, they will find themselves to be viewed as traitors and meet a similar fate.

Hirotsu does not respond after he admits his mistake. Dazai’s gaze is icy cold. Time passes in frigid silence.

“...I’m scaring you! I’m just joking!” Dazai suddenly bursts out merrily.

Hirotsu looks at him in confusion.

“It’s precisely because Hirotsu-san wouldn’t easily get rid of his subordinates that so many people follow him. I’m leaving this to you. I’ll keep it from the leader,” he laughs as he walks over, patting Hirotsu’s shoulder.

Hirotsu nods his head, stunned. Unconsciously, he brings his hand to touch his throat which has gone stiff.

As the youngest executive in mafia history, Dazai is a living legend. The truth cannot slip past Dazai’s eyes. This applies to both outside and within the mafia.

Another important point: No one can tell what Dazai fancies or detests, what he will approve of or denounce. Not even Hirotsu, a veteran of the mafia for over ten years.

Right now, it would not come as a surprise if Dazai chose to “take care” of Hirotsu.

“Now, back to business. Do we have footage of the attacker?”

Upon Hirotsu’s instruction, a black-suited subordinate produces five freshly developed photos from the security cameras. Dazai receives them and flips through them.

The pictures reveal several men breaking in and moving the Port Mafia’s arms and explosives out of the store. Their heads are wrapped in old cloth bags, dressed in filthy tarps as outerwear. On the surface, they look no different from vagabonds, but—

“They’re soldiers,” Dazai laughs lightly as he looks through the photos, “And from the looks of it, they’ve received training.”

Dazai views the photos from different angles, focused on the poorly dressed humans in the darkness.

“Upon first glance, anyone would think that they’re vagabonds. But to avoid any gaps in their defense, these guys advance in a diamond formation. Hirotsu-san, can you see this gun model?”

Dazai points to a gun holstered on one of the attacker’s waist.

“This is a very old model. It should be even older than me. Judging from its grey body and thin muzzle, it’s an old European pistol known as “Grey Spectre”.

“I saw this gun yesterday,” Dazai narrows his eyes. “These weapon storage thieves raided us before. Which means this was a feint. This is starting to get fun. These guys are more interesting than I thought.”

Holding the photos, Dazai turns his back to the people and begins to walk. He rests his thumb on his lip, pacing in circles, muttering under his breath to himself.

“Does this mean that the information we received about those illegal goods were deliberately leaked? We focused all our forces on one point and weakened the weapons store’s security. Then they stole – stole a large quantity of firearms. Why? To sell? No! If that were the case, it doesn’t have to be weapons. I see, this is—“

Dazai remains deep in thought, thinking to himself. The subordinates around him can only silently wait for him.

“ ... ”

Hirotsu’s subordinates stand around, watching the much younger executive thinking.

“I feel...”

After a long period of silence, Dazai says:

“...a little thirsty.”

“I’ll get someone to buy you a drink,” Hirotsu gestures to the subordinates, issuing an order. One member runs off in a frenzy.

“I want a very cold coffee, with more milk,” Dazai calls towards the frenzied man in black, “Ah, but don’t put ice inside. If they have decaf, get that. Double the sugar!”

Watching the sweating man in black repeating the details of his order, Dazai suddenly says, “Hirotsu-san. The weapons store the enemy raided this time is no ordinary store. This is one of the three important stores containing the Port Mafia’s emergency weapons. Security is extremely tight. If any unauthorised personnel approach the store, they will sound the security alarm. Not only did the enemy easily disable our security system, they also keyed in the correct security number. Only authorised executives and higher ups know this code. The question is: how did the enemy get a hold of such an important code?”

Hirotsu’s expression hardens. There are ways to get the answer – interrogating a member to get them to spill, using an ability to obtain the code, or obtaining it through a traitor amongst the mafia’s ranks.

Regardless which is the truth, the end result would be the worst

“This strip of land will become a battlefield,” Dazai raises his head towards the skyscrapers of the city center, laughing slightly, “I can even imagine the columns of flames rising over there and the sky burnt to a crisp.”

“Is there no way to get hold of information about the enemy?” Hirotsu asks emotionlessly.

“My subordinates were planning to get the prisoners to talk. Unfortunately, things didn’t go as planned. At a moment’s opportunity, they swallowed poison hidden in their teeth and committed suicide. The only words we got

was the name of the enemy.”

Dazai’s gaze towards Hirotsu turns dark instantly, as though representative of the gravity of his next words. If it were any ordinary person being stared at, they would be seized by nightmares for the next few days. Dazai’s eyes foretell the impending blood and violence about to come.

“Mimic.”

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BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 1, 5/9)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/145755151267/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Thanks to @nakaharachuyaa for proofreading!

Some warnings for violence in the coming parts, but you should probably know that if you're reading BSD. Things can only get worse from here on out. Feel free if you notice anything weird or want to yell in general.

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I start on the task entrusted to me by the leader to determine Ango's whereabouts. However, I have no leads before me. Searching for the mafia's intelligence agent is completely different from searching for a missing housecat. (I have, in fact, found a missing cat, so I am quite certain on this.) When a cat goes missing, one only needs to lie in wait around feeding places in the vicinity. However, I have no way of determining where Ango eats.

Without any leads, I make two conjectures.

There are two possible reasons for Ango's disappearance. The first is out of his own will; the other is being abducted by someone. If it's the former, there's nothing I can do about it. Ango isn't the kind of youth to rebel against his parents. If he had the intention to disappear, he could have easily prepared the funds. With so much money, he could abscond to the other end of the world to live amongst nomadic tribes. I strike this possibility off the list.

The other possibility is that Ango was taken by force. Based on what the leader's guess, enemy organisations are eyeing the information inside Ango's head, so this is the most likely possibility.

If that is the case, I secretly hope Ango could leave behind some clues, like the trail of bread crumbs in a fairy tale.

I decide to check around Ango's house first.

Now that I think about it, I know nothing of Ango's private life. We have always maintained a certain distance between the three of us. Be it Dazai or Ango, our personal lives are not mentioned often.

The three of us are like lonesome thieves who took refuge in the same abandoned temple on a rainy night. We know nothing about one another, yet we can still talk on and on.

I distinctly remember Ango mentioning that he travels often, hopping across various hotels. Because his life is constantly at risk, he only accepts hotels protected by the Port Mafia. There are many scattered across the prefecture. These hotels place great importance on the privacy of their guests, and they are usually accompanied by armed guards. Ordinary persons must go through rigorous selection before being allowed to stay.

I try calling a few of these hotels to ask around. Upon hearing that I am a member of the company, his tone changes into an inviting one, cooperatively answering my questions. If we were meeting face to face, he would be on the ground, clambering onto my knees.

After three calls, I finally got hold of Ango's address.

The concrete 18-floor hotel sits not too far away from the main road, surrounded by similar buildings and a few parks. Even though it's daytime, the surroundings are extremely quiet, solemn even. This solemnness is characteristic of the Port Mafia's land, a familiar, calming solemnness. The sort of place Ango would like.

I obtain the key from the manager and head towards the room Ango has rented. According to the manager, six months ago, Ango paid the rent in full and started living here. Due to the nature of his job, he very rarely returns; only

returning every few days to stay for the night when he does, and leaves the next day. The manager notes that no one else has ever entered or left the room.

The room is a clean single suite.

The room is spotless. There is barely any furniture in the reception area. The bookshelf is filled with books about various cultures and old fiction novels. The ventilation hole is hidden neatly on the ceiling and unnoticeable without further inspection. The ventilation fan turns noiselessly. A black wooden stool sits quietly in the corner of the room.

The bedroom has a small desk and a single bed with sheets pressed with no wrinkles. Under the reading light by the pillow's side is an open book – a memoir of a genius mathematician and his artistic mathematical theories.

The room is full of Ango's personality: clean, packed with knowledge, inorganic. It's hard to imagine how he lives in this house.

I stand in the middle of the room and carefully survey the surroundings.

Something doesn't feel right. Something very minute. Something inconspicuous, that people don't normally pay attention to.

"Sakaguchi Ango, Port Mafia's intelligence agent," I try getting into his frame of thinking by reciting his title. "A secretive, knowledgeable man. No one knows your true identity."

Of course, there is no response. I walk towards the window.

The facing windows are inlaid with four panels of glass with a view of Yokohama's streets. Right below is a park, with sprawling buildings further ahead. At night, the view is like the starry sky reflected in a lake.

I turn my back towards the window, surveying the room again. Suddenly, I realise what's been throwing me off.

I am a mafioso who doesn't kill. Perhaps it is because of this, I often end up doing silly, troublesome jobs. But during the process of such jobs, my intuition has become more acute. The small detail is as thin and brittle and could break at any moment's notice. But as long as I can grab hold and pull it over, I can uncover the truth which no one would have thought of.

The wooden stool in the corner of the room is highly unnatural. It doesn't look like part of the hotel's furniture. Now that I think about it, there are no tables in this room for the stool.

I walk closer to inspect the stool. It is an ordinary mass produced stool. I flip it over – if there is an important clue on the underside. Unfortunately, there isn't.

I put it back down in its original position, kneeling down to inspect it further. I realise that there are some scuff marks on the seat's surface. It doesn't look like it's been used for a very long time. Upon closer inspection, I realise there is some wear and tear and white marks that look like shoeprints.

I survey the entire house again.

—The vent on the ceiling.

I pick up the stool, moving directly below the vent. Standing on the stool, my hand just reaches the ceiling. The vent is fitted with a plastic grill, making it hard to see what's inside.

After some effort, I manage to remove the grill. The ventilator inside turns quietly in the ventilation duct. I reach my hand in to probe about the vent.

After searching for a long while, my fingers brush against something. I try to pull it out. There is a dragging sound, and a small safe appears.

I come down from the stool holding the small safe in my arms, dusting it off.

This is a small, white coloured safe that can be easily carried around with two hands. It's been locked, but a key or a professional locksmith's tools would probably be able to open this.

I violently shake it in front of my chest. Something light inside makes a clattering noise.

At this moment, I see an image.

The white safe in my hands are splattered with a dark red.

The walls in front of me, the floor, are all covered in red. Something has burst and splashed all over the floor.

It's blood. My blood.

I look down towards my chest and blood spurts out.

It entered from my back and went right through my chest.

I turn to look behind to see that the window has been shattered.

From the window, I can see one of the rooms in a building in the far distance. There's something - the riflescope of a sniper rifle gleams from the sun's reflection.

I reach for the gun under my arm, but it is struck by a fast bullet. Blood spurts from my arm, and my body spins half a circle.

A metallic taste forms in my throat and I hit the ground. Darkness engulfs my vision.

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BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 1, 6/9)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/145797550227/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Shit is going down I repeat shit is going down. Please thank [@nakaharachuyaa](#) for their tireless proofreading work!

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The image ends.

I retain the same stance, holding the safe, standing as I am.

The safe is still white, and the window panes are not shattered.

I wrap the safe in my arms and lie flat on the carpets.

Almost simultaneously, I hear the sound of glass shattering. A small black hole appears on the wall facing me, then another.

I roll myself away from the window. Moving to a spot where I won't be seen from the opposite building, I draw my weapon from its holster, back pressed against the wall, and raise the pistol.

With great difficulty, I reach for the mirror on the table. I almost drop it due to my sweaty palms. Gripping it firmly again, I adjust its angle to observe the situation outside of the window.

Spotting the room in my vision from the mirror, I can see shadows moving inside, but I cannot make out their features. The shadow is packing something. In a blink of an eye, they disappear from view.

I lower my gun and realise I have been holding my breath.

It's a sniper.

What is in this apartment? And what has Ango gotten himself into? I'd just been shot dead by a sniper. Considering I didn't see the spark when they fired, nor did I hear the sound of the bullet, and the fact that the enemy quickly fled upon realising they'd failed to eliminate the target. They must be a professional.

Just not too long ago, I died after being shot in the heart by a bullet.

That is, if I didn't have an ability.

I rushed out as quickly as if I'd slid down the banister of the stairs.

The sniper shouldn't have gotten too far. I have to find out his true identity.

Pushing aside some innocent hotel guests and rushing out of the building, I run towards the building the sniper was in, fishing out the phone in my breast pocket.

An excellent sniper can accurately hit their target's heart from a kilometre away. Judging the distance between the two buildings, it's not as far. I am familiar with the building the sniper was positioned in. I know every building and street in this city, even the small alleys unmarked on maps. I naturally narrow down a few of the enemy's possible escape routes.

As I sprint towards the building, I punch numbers into the phone to call Dazai.

“Is this Dazai?”

“Ah, how rare it is for Odasaku to call me! Something must have happened! Hohoho, please hold on as I use my prodigious mind to make a guess. Ah! Odasaku must have thought of a very interesting joke and couldn’t wait to share it with me, so he called—“

“I’ve been attacked by a sniper,” I say quickly.

Dazai’s inhales sharply and he cuts off his words.

“In Ango’s house. I’m chasing the attacker now. The point of fire was from the building opposite Kosho Road. To flee from there, you have to pass either Kokuyou Temple, or the port’s unloading bay, or head out from the street behind the boat shop—“

“You want me to cut off his escape route, right?”

I was dazed for a moment. The only reason I called Dazai is because I couldn’t think of anyone to go to for help on such short notice. He is one of the five executives, second only to the leader in the mafia. Under normal circumstances, it would take a month to request for an audience and get a glimpse of him. To call someone of his status and issue an order is like asking the prime minister to walk my dog.

“Dazai, I have the ‘Silver Oracle’ on hand right now. If you don’t mind—“

“There’s no need, this sort of thing doesn’t matter anyway. You’re in danger, right?” Dazai says clearly, “I’ll call for men to seal the roads. I’ll be right there. Don’t pursue them too closely, Odasaku.”

I thank him and hang up the phone.

All I can do from here is to focus all my energy on my legs and run as fast as I can.

What kind of person will the sniper be?

Snipers are generally very cautious people with high tolerance. They follow plans religiously. After locking on the target and choosing a suitable sniping location, they wait. Until the moment the enemy steps into their viewfinder’s field of vision, they will stay in the same position for days, sustaining themselves on rations. If they run out, they’ll go on empty stomachs and wait.

That is to say, snipers appear there fully believing that their target will appear there.

Looking at it logically, the sniper watching Ango’s room was waiting for Ango himself. It is natural to believe that they were waiting for the unknowing Ango to come home and assassinate him. Perhaps that was the original plan.

But if that was the case, there’s a slight problem – why did the sniper change his plans and shoot at me?

My decision to go to Ango’s house a few hours ago was only because I had no leads.

The sniper opened fire when I found that white safe. If he wanted to shoot, he would have done so the moment I entered the room.

It’s possible that the sniper didn’t have a clear target. He could have been aiming for anyone who entered the room. Or perhaps he was instructed to shoot whoever found that safe. One thing I can say for certain is that Ango seems to have gotten himself into something dangerous.

While I run, I think about Ango’s cold, unreadable, bespectacled face.

No matter how hard I breathe, it is not enough to replenish the oxygen supply in my body. As my vision starts to turn white, I arrive at one of the possible escape routes. This is a dark, narrow backalley, littered with the remains of crows' lunches.

On the way here, I cut through the gardens of two families and leapt over garages of three private estates. If the enemy isn't familiar with the area, I should be able to catch a glimpse of their back by now.

As I was thinking this, a blade-wielding figure grabs hold of me from a gap between two buildings.

The enemy moves skilfully with his blade. I shift my head to the side, dodging the strike. The blade brushes past my ear, leaving a sharp and icy cold sensation.

I deliver a kick to the enemy's entangled body. The counterforce throws me onto the litter strewn ground. At least I've succeeded in putting distance between us.

I raise my head and catch a glimpse of my attacker.

He is a foreigner dressed in dirty grey rags of unknown nationality. He looks like a vagrant, but the black filth on his face have marks left behind by fingers. It must have been purposefully applied. He sways a little as he walks, raising his blade in his left hand. He has both arms raised, right arm braced in front of his face as protections. This is a stance that allows for one to switch between blocking and attacking at close combat range with minimal movements. The enemy emanates a strong aura of murderous intent like a well-trained guard dog.

I can infer a few things from the man's features. Firstly, he knows that I am from the Port Mafia, but has no intention of backing off or giving me any opportunity to do so because of this. I am willing to bet that he is the same person as the sniper I spotted in the mirror. There is no doubt that he plans to kill me here.

The man steps forward, waving the blade gripped in his left fist. If I take his fist head on, my face will be smashed. If I run or dodge, his blade will cut my flesh. Pressing against the wall behind me, I use my weight to leap in another direction, putting distance between me and the other man. I whip out my pistol from its holster while I turn and fire a shot immediately.

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I actually do not know the official reading of the street name and temple, I sort of half guessed them using Chinese characters as the kanji itself. From the looks of it, 古書路 and 国曜寺 don't actually exist either. The literal translation of it would be "ancient book road" and "bright country temple" if you really have to know. If you have the Japanese raws and would like to confirm this for me, I'd be eternally grateful. It's not of particular importance in the grand scheme of things, anyway.

[June 12th \(144\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 1, 7/9)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/145854395192/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

If you haven't thanked [@nakaharachuyaa](#) for proofreading please do! We are literally tumbling into an abyss of hell. Scan by [@akutagawaprice](#) (all scans [here](#))

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The bullet hits the space just before his toe. The enemy stops in his tracks.

Not even 0.1 seconds have passed between the moment I drew my gun to the moment I fired. If the man is well-versed in battle, he would know that I was not aiming blindly, but rather, had aimed to shoot at that spot.

I raise my gun, aiming between the enemy's eyes, hinting to him that I can shoot at any moment's notice.

Despite having ample time to understand this, the man still lunges towards me.

He brandishes his blade again.

I leap backwards to dodge his blade. I fire a warning shot towards the sky to intimidate the enemy. The sound of the gunshot echoes in the narrow back alley. To the enemy, it is no more surprising than a spring breeze. It's as though this man's sense of fear is squared away and sealed in a box in some corner of his mind.

The opponent reaches out towards me – but he's not aiming for me. I realise this and pull the white safe under my left arm back. The enemy grabs at the empty space. He immediately resumes his stance, keeping me in check with his blade to maintain distance.

The opponent's target is this safe.

For this, he pretended to flee and lay in wait here.

If such was the case, maybe the best strategy would be to flee with it. I have no clue of the enemy's identity or the value of the safe's content. The enemy's knife skills are exemplary, and isn't fazed by gunshots. On top of that, I—

The enemy moves to strike with his blade. I fire a shot towards the wall, hoping to scare him. But the enemy reads the spot I'm aiming at and fearlessly charges towards me.

I suddenly feel the presence of another person behind me. I lunge my body forward.

The shot lights up the backalley and the sound of metal being discharged rings forth. A bullet flies past my ear. I didn't fire that bullet.

My entire body turns stiff. I couldn't turn my gaze towards my back, but I understood immediately.

There is another enemy behind me.

In a typical sniping operation, there is usually an "observer" paired with the sniper. The observer operates with the sniper, and is in charge of adjusting and directing. He monitors the situation and eliminates any nearby enemies.

The moment the enemy began to retaliate, I should have guessed that there were two enemies.

The shot fired by this second person was not from a sniper rifle, but an old handgun. I grab a trash bag and fling it in the air as a temporary smokescreen, firing wildly, hoping to use the ricocheting bullets to form a cover.

There is no time to ascertain if my actions had been effective. The blade-wielding man is already approaching me.

The dagger and pistol clash, causing sparks. The trigger guard is cut off by the knife, and a mournful sound fills the air.

I sweep my leg at the opponent's ankle. The enemy loses his balance, one hand contacting the ground.

I reflexively toss the safe aside and whip out another gun. I am a dual-wielding shooter, so I always carry two guns with me.

Without being aware of it, I aim my gun just before the enemy's nose. From this distance, I cannot miss.

If I shoot right now, the opponent will have no time to think and will die instantly. He won't even have time to feel pain. His brain will turn to mush and become one with the filth on the wall. His life will disappear instantly, like magic.

I do not shoot. I back away, maintaining a distance. I rise to my feet and keep my gun and my enemies within sight.

"Odasaku! Get down!"

At this moment, I hear Dazai's voice.

Before hearing his voice, I already knew *that* would come. I bend forward and throw my entire body to the ground. Flashes of light and the sound of explosions fill the narrow backalley.

Using my ability, I predicted this would happen. I lay on the ground, covering my ears, closing my eyes, waiting for the flashes to cease. The enemies are temporarily blinded by the flash bang, completely unable to dodge the next wave of attacks.

The sound of explosions rings throughout the narrow backalley.

Flashes of light. Explosions. The sharp sound of metal snapping, and the sound of the ground and walls cracking. A shower of 9mm bullets fly over my head.

Four men in black surge forth from the alley's opening. All of them raise their submachine guns to their waist, walking past me. They're Port Mafia.

In a small alley with nowhere to hide, not even a veteran can dodge the raining bullets. Under the barrage of gunfire, the two men in rags scream in pain.

I look over, only to see that the two men are covered in blood. The blood surrounds them like a thick fog, wetly dripping off the walls.

"What will I do with you, Odasaku? You could have killed them in a single breath if you wanted to."

Dazai appears with a spring in his step and looks like he could start whistling at any point. To Dazai, an alley filled with the sound of gunfire is no different from a clean shopping mall on a holiday.

Since Dazai has already offered his hand, I take it and rise to my feet. I survey the backalley.

"Did you kill them?" I glance at the fallen assassins.

"Mm hmm. Even if we caught them alive, there's no hope of getting information out of them. These guys love the taste of stuffing poison in their teeth."



I do not reply. My heart feels heavy, as though there is a heavy stone weighing it down. Dazai smiles gently and says, "I know, that's not what you meant, right? Odasaku, these guys are professionals. Even if it's you, Odasaku, it would have been hard for you not to kill them."

"You're right."

I nod. Dazai is often right, whereas I am often wrong.

"You're in a bad mood... I'm distorting your principles, I'm sorry." There is a small smile on Dazai's face. Dazai rarely says something like "sorry", so his words are surprisingly sincere.

“Ah, it’s all thanks to your help. If you didn’t come to save me, I would have died by now.”

“Oda Sakunosuke, the Port Mafia wonder with the motto: ‘Not to kill anyone no matter what’.” Dazai shakes his head. “It’s all because of your troublesome motto that you’re the organisation’s little runner boy, Odasaku. You’re obviously blessed with great abilities—“

I shake my head solemnly.

“I’ve already heard such complaints tens of thousands of times when I was filled with disdain towards myself. The important thing at hand are these raiders,” I gesture with my gaze towards the fallen attackers.

“You said you were attacked in Ango’s residence?”

I succinctly explain what had happened in the hotel room. Dazai listens wordlessly.

“So that’s how it is. That sniper rifle is probably stolen from our weapon’s store,” Dazai says after hearing my explanation, “Can you check if there’s an old pistol model on their waist?”

I look towards the two fallen raiders. Although it’s shielded from view by their tattered rags, but I can see the old pistol models holstered at their waists. It is a grey gun with a thin muzzle.

“This is a fairly old European pistol. It’s shooting ability and accuracy are pretty rough, which makes it unsuitable to use in such a narrow alley for a gunfight.” Dazai picks up a gun from the corpses, looking over it with interest. “This gun is probably just for show. It’s probably used as an emblem of their identity.”

It looks like Dazai has a better understanding of who these attackers are than me.

“Who are these men?” I ask Dazai.

“Mimic.”

“Mimic?”

It’s the first time I’ve ever heard such a name.

“We’re not entirely clear on the details, but it seems that they are a criminal organisation based in Europe. At the moment, we don’t know why they’re in Japan, or why they’re starting conflict with the Port Mafia.”

It is not uncommon to see organisations at odds with the Port Mafia.

There are many organisations struggling with the mafia for dominance near Yokohama. Out of reach from the government’s forces, Yokohama’s underworld is rife with lawless criminals struggling for territory. The entire world seeks out this haven for avoiding taxes, money laundering, and trading mercenary labour. It is not surprising to see overseas criminal organisations trying to take advantage of this.

However, how many organisations are there in the world that can boast a professional sniper duo?

Dazai takes a look at my puzzled expression and seemingly understands.

“In any case, we’re still investigating the details.” Dazai shrugs his shoulders. “We should be able to find out something if we investigate into this sniping attempt at Ango’s residence.”

“They were trying to get hold of this safe,” I raise the white safe. “This was found in Ango’s room. However, there’s no key to unlock it. If we could just figure out its contents, there may be a clue—“

“What, is that all?” A relaxed smile eases onto Dazai’s face. “That’s easy. Pass it over to me.”

I hand the safe over to Dazai. Dazai shakes the safe and confirms that there is indeed something inside. He rummages through the trash and finds a paper clip. He bends the tip of the paper clip with his finger, and inserts it into the keyhole.

Dazai wriggles the paper clip. Within a second, the lock opens with a satisfying 'click' sound.

"There, it's open."

This guy is really good.

"Now then, what's in here?"

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BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 1, 8/9)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/145878657022/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Please expect the last instalment within the next 24 hours! Once again brought to you with the help of [@nakaharachuyaa](#).

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Dazai opens the lid of the safe and peers inside. From where I'm standing, I can see it as well.

— — —

What does this mean?

This safe was found in Ango's room. Regardless if it's a stool that becomes part of the furniture, or hidden in the ventilator, it's obvious that Ango knows about this safe. To put it more bluntly, this is Ango's personal possession.

Somewhere in my heart, I had hoped that there was something precious hidden in the safe. Ango came into possession of it, and these men in grey attacked kill me in order to gain possession of it.

However, things don't appear to be as they seem.

The safe contains an old grey pistol.

"Why?" I ask without thinking. "Dazai, just now, you said that this gun was an "emblem" of their identity, right? What the hell is going on?"

Dazai doesn't reply immediately, only narrowing his eyes, fixated at the empty space.

"We can't say anything for sure with this alone," Dazai speaks cautiously, "Maybe Ango seized this gun from them. Or maybe they placed this in Ango's house to distort the evidence and frame someone. Maybe this isn't a gun, maybe it's a symbol. Or maybe—"

"I get it, you're right." I cut Dazai off, "We don't have enough information. I'll look into this gun some more. Sorry for troubling you."

"Odasaku..."

Dazai opens his mouth to speak, but I cut him off again.

"Thanks for saving me, but I should investigate this matter further. If I find out anything, I'll let you know."

Dazai looks at me wordlessly. I can see displeasure in his gaze.

I shift my gaze away. I have a premonition that once I pursue this matter, my heart will feel heavy, as though my entire body is sinking and drowning in the darkness.

"Then let me tell you something I noticed." Dazai's expression is stiff, "Yesterday – when we were drinking at the bar, Ango said that he had just returned after finishing a deal, right?"

“That’s right.”

Ango did indeed say that he went to Tokyo and bought a smuggled antique watch back.

“That was probably a lie.”

—What?

“You saw Ango’s briefcase, right? He had cigarettes, a foldable umbrella, and his antique watch spoils. The umbrella was wet, so it was wrapped in a cloth. And it was raining in Tokyo.”

“Is there something wrong?” I ask. “Because it was raining, so his umbrella was wet. I think that’s a logical conclusion.”

“If Ango was speaking the truth, *then he wouldn’t have needed to use that umbrella*,” Dazai says, narrowing his eyes. His expression is unreadable. “Ango should have driven his car to the deal point. If so, when would he have used his umbrella? It couldn’t have been before the deal, since the umbrella was on top of the watch case. And it wasn’t after the deal either.”

“Why?”

“Judging by the wetness of the umbrella, it wasn’t in the rain for only two or three minutes. It should have been in the rain for at least 30 minutes. Even though he was in the rain for so long, Ango’s shoes and trousers were dry. The deal was at 8pm, and we met at 11pm. If he used it in the three hours after the deal, there wouldn’t have been time for him to dry them.”

“Maybe he brought a change of clothes.”

“His briefcase didn’t have the clothes he changed out of, and there wasn’t space for them to begin with.”

Maybe he went home to leave his clothes there, then came out— is what I wanted to say, but I stop myself. If that was the case, he would have left the items he dealt at home, before coming to the bar.

“The umbrella wasn’t used before or after the deal, moreover, *it wasn’t used during the deal*. The wrapping paper wasn’t wet. On top of that, a medieval-era antique watch should never come into contact with water, which means that the deal should have taken place somewhere indoors where it wouldn’t get wet.

“Then, the truth is...”

“My guess is that the antique watch wasn’t obtained from a deal, but it belonged to Ango all along. As to why the box was in his briefcase, it’s because he stuffed it in before he travelled. He didn’t go to settle a deal, but met with someone in the rain, talked for half an hour or so, waited out the remaining time before coming back.”

“Why do you think that he met with someone else?”

“An intelligence agent like Ango typically chooses a rainy street as a secret meeting point. As long as he carries an umbrella during the conversation, he can shield his face and avoid being noticed by people or security cameras. Even if someone tried to listen in, the sound of rain will muffle the conversation, which beats conversing in a car or someplace indoors.”

I seem to have a comprehensive understanding of what Dazai is trying to say. But to find a glimmer of hope, I try to raise an objection.

“Maybe Ango really did tell a lie. But Ango is an intelligence agent with all of the Port Mafia’s highly confidential information. There must be one or two top secret meetings he can’t tell people about; we can’t blame him...”

“In the case, all he needs to say is ‘I can’t tell.’. That way, neither you or I would pursue the matter, no?”

“...”

That is indeed the case. He’s right.

“So Ango lied about the deal and purposely used the watch he brought out as evidence for an alibi. Even if you overlook that, what reason does he have for keeping the meeting a secret from us?”

—Is it because he predicted such a situation would happen?

Dazai’s gaze is icy cold, as though trying to say this.

—*What time did the deal end?*

I remember the question Dazai had asked out of the blue when he saw Ango’s paper box. Now that I remember it, Dazai had taken one look and deduced everything he had just said, asking if only to confirm his suspicions.

—Ango. Mimic. Attack.

Everything is starting to come together.

“Odasaku. You need to be careful. The current situation has progressed into your metaphorical cup of water. And it’s at the point of overflow,” Dazai says, “If you throw anything new in, the water will overflow. You won’t be able to handle it alone. From here on out, let me handle this. I’ll leave Ango to you.”

“Ah, okay...”

Dazai and I exchange glances and we head out of the alley.

At that moment, I realise something’s off.

The attacker from before has already gotten up.

“Dazai!”

I shout, raising my gun at the same time as the attacker.

“No one... move...” The attacker rasps hoarsely.

Even if Dazai’s subordinates or I shoot the attacker, the attacker is too close to Dazai. The muzzle of his gun is already aimed towards Dazai.

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BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 1, 9/9)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/145924697132/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

I would like to affectionately refer to this instalment as the one that ripped my heart out and punched me in the face. Thanks goes to double kat squad [@nakaharachuyaa](#) and [@mIntyoonqi](#) for proofreading and all 300 of you!

Please consider purchasing the book! You can find it on the [official site](#) or [Kinokuniya](#) ([Chinese version](#) too!) for US (and Kino also has stores in other parts of the world, use the ISBN number).

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The attacker raises his gun in his right hand, while his left hangs limply by his side. He looks like he's unable to stand, half his body leaning against the wall for support. Despite this, Dazai is still within his line of fire. We cannot move easily.

"Unbelievable," Dazai looks at the attacker as though he is some exotic item. "Being able to stand even after taking so many bullets, what admirable resilience."

Between the two assailants, one has already stopped breathing. The other seems fully intent on using the last of his strength to take Dazai to the grave with him.

"Dazai, don't move. I'll think of something."

My fingers slowly reach for my gun.

The gunman in grey could kill Dazai at any moment. Since the muzzle is already aimed at Dazai, even if I shoot the attacker's heart in one shot, the attack may release the old pistol's trigger. Timing is important. Although I don't want to stake everything I have on this, but I don't have any other options.

"Your organisation's name is 'Mimic', am I wrong?" Dazai says to the attacker.

The attacker doesn't reply, his expression unchanging.

"I don't expect a reply from you. Actually, I respect you guys a great deal. There's never been an organisation that has come at the mafia so directly. More importantly, no one has ever successfully pointed a gun at me with such murderous intent before."

Dazai starts to walk towards the attacker, as though walking around one's own garden at home.

"Dazai, no!" I lower my voice.

"I hope you too can see the gratitude in my eyes," Dazai continues to speak to the gun-wielding attacker. "All you need to do is curl your finger a little. I've been waiting impatiently for this to happen. My only fear is that you'll miss."

Dazai smiles as he approaches the attacker. The distance between him and the muzzle is less than three meters.

"You should aim at either the heart or the head, but I recommend the head. You only have one chance. My colleagues aren't kind enough to let you shoot a second time." Dazai taps his forehead with his fingers at the spot just above the brows. "But you can do it. You're a sniper, right? Your face has marks from handling a sniper rifle. You're not the observer."

Indeed, the left side of the attacker's face has imprints left behind from aiming with a sniper rifle for a long period of

time. An observer using binoculars wouldn't have such marks.

The attacker raises the gun with a trembling hand. Dazai is right – he can only fire once. If he didn't have confidence in killing Dazai, he wouldn't shoot.

Dazai approaches the attacker as though welcoming him.

"Alright, shoot. Right here. At this distance, you can't miss." Dazai is all smiles. "Regardless if you shoot or not, you'll be killed. That being the case, you might as well try taking down one of the enemy's executives."

"Dazai!" I shout. It feels like there's tens of thousands of kilometres between me and Dazai.

"Please, take me with you. Wake me up from this rotten world of a dream. Come on, come on, come on!"

Dazai continues to point at his forehead, walking towards him with a serene smile.

The attacker bites his lip and presses down.

—It's at the critical point!

The attacker and I open fire at the same time.

The alley lights up with two flashes of light.

The bullet pierces the attacker's arm and sends him spinning.

Dazai, inches away from being shot, leans back.

The moment passes in a flash.

A moment that feels like an eternity.

Dazai's subordinates fire their bullets at the attacker at the same time. The attacker is ripped apart like a ragged washcloth being rinsed in a waterfall, blood and flesh splashing out from the back as he dies.

Still leaning back, Dazai takes two, three steps back, stopping in his original position.

".....How disappointing." Still leaning back, Dazai says, "I didn't manage to die again."

Dazai straightens himself up. The skin at the top of his right ear has been torn off and blood is flowing from the wound.

The bullet just barely missed.

I look at Dazai. There is something invisible within that can't be seen with the naked eye, like a breeding ground for spirits that will raze everything to the ground.

"Sorry, you must have gotten a shock." Dazai notices my gaze, checking the wound on the side of his head.

"My acting was pretty realistic, huh? I knew that he would miss from the start. The marks from the sniper rifle was imprinted on the left of his face, right? That means he places the sniper rifle on his left. He's a left-hander. But he was holding the gun in his right. He wasn't using his dominant hand and wasn't standing steadily. Considering that he could only take one shot with that old pistol, unless he rests it against his body, there would be no way he could have hit the mark."

I do not reply, simply staring at Dazai smiling as he explains.

“After that, I talked to stall for time, waiting for his arm to get tired. As long as I approached him slowly, he wouldn’t shoot immediately. After that, I waited for Odasaku to think of something. That’s what I was thinking. Logical, no?”

“Makes sense.”

That’s all I say. I cannot bring myself to continue replying him.

If the circumstances were different, if I had a different relationship with Dazai, it would not be surprising if I’d punched Dazai right there and then in such a situation. But me being me, I cannot do anything as such to Dazai.

I put my gun back in my holster, walking away with my back turned to Dazai.

With every step I take, I feel as though the earth has opened up into a bottomless pit as I fall endlessly.

As Dazai pointed to his forehead and approached the muzzle, the look on his face – like that of a child about to burst into tears – had already been branded upon my eyes.

End of Chapter 1

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Thanks for sticking with me this far! I’m going to take a bit more time between parts for the following chapters because I need to segment them, but I’ll do my best to get things done as fast as possible.

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 2, Part 1)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/146131765787/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

I just want to apologise for the wait on this - I was trying to cut the parts up (a third of the chapter has already been translated) and I'm still a little unsure how I'll be sectioning them. For now, please assume that there will be nine parts for this chapter as well, but depending on how things go I might shorten that to eight or something. To make it easier, the last part of the chapter will be marked as End instead.

Please also thank @nakaharachuyaa and @mlntyoonqi for their speedy proofreading work!

Chapter 2

It drizzles for a while and stops.

Dazai is running around everywhere collecting information on Mimic. I roam the streets in search of clues. Although something important is slipping from my hands as the seconds tick by, I can't seem to tell what that something is. The more important it is, the harder it is to see it, especially when it's gone.

The time taken to think gets longer and longer.

Why did Ango disappear? At this point, we can say with certainty that Ango has some sort of connection with Mimic. As to what this connection is, it is still unclear, as is Ango's reason for lying about his travels. Like a lone zombie wandering in a clean cemetery, I roam Yokohama's streets looking for a non-existent glimmer of hope.

There is one conjecture that I dare not tell anyone, because I cannot bring myself to think it. Dazai probably has a similar conjecture in mind, but Dazai won't tell anyone about it as either.

Disappearing at the same time Mimic appeared, lying about his travels to fabricate an alibi, the gun in the safe, and a sniper urgently trying to retrieve said gun.

Sakaguchi Ango is a Mimic spy.

Such an assumption would explain everything.

Mimic brought Ango over to spy on the Port Mafia.

I shake my head. That's impossible. If that was the case, that would mean that Ango is a great spy that can deceive both Dazai and the leader with abilities beyond that of government informants. For Mimic to spare such a clever spy, what do they want from the Port Mafia?

"Odasaku, your face is all scrunched up. Are you having constipation?"

The boss of the Western restaurant is talking to me.

"It's not constipation, I'm just thinking about things. If it was constipation, I'd be avoiding foods like curry."

I am currently eating curry in a Western restaurant.

"Really? That's true... Odasaku, do you get angry if people talk about such things while you're eating curry?"

"Is that so?" I reply. "Should I get angry?"

"Uh... I'm not sure myself."

“Hey!” I look at him seriously.

“You don’t have to force yourself, Odasaku.”

The owner of this restaurant and I are old friends. He is at his prime, around fifty, with a belly protruding so much that he can’t see the tips of his toes when he looks down while standing. His hair is thinning and the corners of his eyes are full of laughter lines. His yellow apron is practically one with his body, leaving people to wonder if he had been born like this.

I eat the curry here three times a week out of habit. Habits are a strange thing. If I don’t eat here every few days, I start to feel thirsty and find it hard to focus. Because of the mafia’s retribution, I have seen countless druggies. Perhaps they experience similar feelings.

“How’s the curry?”

“It’s the same as always.”

The curry rice here is simple. There are vegetables cooked until they are soft and tender and beef tendons fried with garlic. The stock is clear. Cooked together with a blend of spices in the perfect ratio and drizzled over white rice, then mixed further. I usually beat the egg into the sauce and eat them together.

After I have my fill, I enjoy life’s small fortunes while I drink coffee.

After which, I ask, “How are the kids?”

“They’re the same as always,” the owner says as he wipes dishes with a cloth, “They’re like a small gang. Since there are only five of them, I still have them under control. If there were five more, they might rob an international bank. They’re all on the second floor, you can go over and show your face.”

I decide to do as he says. The space above the restaurant has been refurbished from an old meeting room into living quarters. Once I climb up the reinforced concrete stairs plastered with filthy wallpaper, I see the two doors that separately lead to the children’s common room and study. I go through the door leading to the common room.

“Yo, how’s everyone?” I say to the children.

The children are all occupied, focusing all their attention on individual activities. One is looking at picture books, one is drawing on drawing paper, one is throwing softballs the size of their fists against the wall, one is playing Cat’s Cradle with a thick piece of rope. The youngest is a four-year-old girl, while the oldest is a nine-year-old boy. None of them raise their heads.

“Have you guys been giving Uncle trouble? Uncle used to be a really skilled soldier. If he wanted to, he could make the lot of you five—”

While I was joking around, I notice something – there should be five children, but there are only four in front of my eyes. There is a shuffling presence under the sheets of the double decker bed on my right.

I squat down immediately and maintain a low stance.

A swift moving shadow appears from under the sheets – it’s the fifth child. I lower my head, dodging past the shadow charging towards me.

However, the attack is a decoy. The girl that was drawing leaps towards my right leg as I lose my balance. This was planned. Losing the freedom of one of my legs, I step my foot out against the real attack. However, I don’t succeed. The multi-stranded rope used to play Cat’s Cradle up till now had been placed in the direction my foot headed in. A

trap! My ankle is trapped in the taut rope. My body lost contact with the ground and for a moment, I was flying through the air.

I use my right hand to grab hold of the double decker bed to prevent myself from falling. But they had long foreseen this action, smearing wax crayons on the bed's handles. Because of this, my right hand slips off the frictionless handle.

I stick both hands to the floor, hoping to use the counterforce to push myself up. But within that short span of time, my defenceless back is left exposed to the small gang in front of me. They wouldn't miss an opportunity like this.

Judging from their breathing, I sense the seven-year-old boy and eight-year-old girl leaping towards me from behind. If I take this attack, I can foresee myself being hauled up to the gallows like a criminal.

I need to show them just how terrifying a true mafioso is.

I use my hand to swiftly deflect an incoming softball. The softball rebounds against the wall, hitting the seven-year-old boy squarely in the face. Having missed his target, he falls to the ground in a bid to protect himself.

I twist my ankle with some force to free myself from the rope, placing my weight on my left foot. The child firmly wrapped around my right leg lets out a scream of delight as I raise my foot, before dropping on the floor. By this time, the remaining eight-year-old has leapt onto my back, but to leave him to suppress me is too great a responsibility for him alone. I stand while carrying the boy on my back.

The agile boy that was hiding in the sheets from the beginning is the head of this gang. Having seen the pitiful defeat of his subordinates, he still bravely leaps towards me. Since it is a battle led by him, he won't go down easily no matter how bad the loss.

I block the boy leaping towards my lower half head on. Aiming for the legs to disrupt one's balance is an excellent move, but the difference between our masses is too great. I grab the boy from under the armpits and raise him up, shaking him with his head down, feet up. The boy lets out a sound like a goat having a hangover.

"Do you want to surrender?" I ask.

"No way!" the boy shouts.

The remaining children have lost their will to fight, and instead, have come forth to watch how much longer their head can hold onto his post as commander.

"Then let's carry out a mafia-style interrogation." I grab the boy's armpits and tickle furiously.

"Buhyaaaaaa! Wait... Yaaaaaaa!"

After two minutes and forty-two seconds, the boy agrees to sign the terms of surrender.

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BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 2, Part 2)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/146178753367/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Here we go! As usual, please let me know if anything seems wrong to you. And as always, thank you to double kat [@nakaharachuyaa](#) and [@mlntyoonqi](#). Scan by [@akutagawaprize](#) (all scans [here](#))

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I talk to the children for a while. According to them, they rate living in the Western restaurant with a passing grade. On the other hand, I can sense their displeasure towards rotating meals only once every three days. If this cannot be rectified soon, I have to agree to let them use the kitchen.

“Uncle’s a very nice person,” the oldest boy says, “But how should I put it, he treats us all like little kids. All of us are obviously grown-ups! Are you saying that we’ll be a hassle to the adults if we become independent as soon as possible?”

I reply, “Probably.”

I tell the kids I look forward to the ‘next time’. That’s the truth. After which, I leave the second floor.

Returning to the shop on the first floor, I hear the voice of a new customer. It’s a familiar voice.

“So spicy! It’s so spicy, Uncle, it’s so spicy! You didn’t put lava in as a secret ingredient, did you?!”

“Hahaha, is that so? Odasaku always eats this. Welcome back, Odasaku. How are the kids?”

“It was pretty thrilling, but I managed to avoid defeat,” I reply, “But they predicted where I would grab and covered it with wax crayons to make it slippery; I almost broke into a cold sweat. Uncle, you said before that if there were ten of them, they could rob a bank. But I think in two years, they can do it with just the five of them.”

“Should I go recruit those kids?” Dazai laughs, wiping his sweat. “I heard, Odasaku. You’re taking care of kids? Furthermore, they are the orphans who lost their parents from the ‘Dragon’s Head Rush’.”

Since it’s Dazai, no matter how I try to hide it, he’ll be able to find out in half a day. “That’s right,” I nod.

The children are orphans. If I hadn’t saved them, they would have died a long time ago.

Two years ago. A large scale war broke out between several organisations including the Port Mafia, known as ‘Dragon’s Head Rush’. For the sake of staking claim to fifty billion yen left behind by an ability user, bloodshed broke out between several illegal organisations. Several illegal armed organisations were brought to the brink of collapse.

I was also involved in that campaign. One would run into a bloody fight on the streets every ten minutes, mountains of bodies piled high.

The children on the second floor are children who lost their homes in that war.

“Oda Sakunosuke, the mafioso who refuses to kill, is obviously incredibly skilled but isn’t interested in standing out, is raising five orphans.” Dazai is laughing, “How strange. Probably the strangest person in the mafia.”

As long as Dazai’s around, I’m not the strangest person.

I turn to the owner, taking out an envelope filled with cash from my jacket pocket. “Uncle, this is for the children’s

living expenses.”



“Is this okay, Odasaku?” the owner asks, voice tinged with concern. He wipes his hands on his apron and receives the envelope. “This is practically all your earnings, right? If you don’t mind, I can help pay for some of it.”

“I’m thankful that Uncle’s lending me this place. As long as I can eat the curry here anytime, that’s enough for me.”

“Does Odasaku always eat such spicy food?” Dazai asks as he drinks a cup of water. “It’s so spicy, my chin is going to drop off.”

“Then what are you doing here, Dazai?” I ask.

"I wanted to report about *that thing* to Odasaku. We got a lot of information, especially with regards to the enemy."

That thing... only one comes to mind.

"Sorry Uncle, do you mind leaving us for a while?"

"Sure, sure, I'll be at the back preparing ingredients. If a customer comes, let me know."

It's as though the boss understands everything from my expression. He takes off his apron, leaving quickly through the back door.

In the end, Dazai gulps down his cup of water while finishing off the most part of his curry rice. During this time, I let myself into the kitchen and brew coffee, pouring a cup to drink.

"Ahh, so spicy! Why does curry rice have to be so spicy? Does it have something against the human race? If it wasn't so spicy, more people would eat it. What an insult to food culture!"

After some thought, I reply, "If the number of people who eat it increase, there won't be people to eat other foods. Food culture will collapse on itself."

"I see." Dazai nods in agreement.

"So, the report?"

"Let's start with the conclusion. They're a foreign criminal organisation," Dazai starts talking as he pours more water into the cup. "They've only recently moved into Japan. They're a reputable ability criminal organisation in Europe. They were expelled from Europe by the ancient English organisation 'Order of the Clock Tower' and escaped here."

"A criminal organisation from Europe?"

"Europe is the stronghold of ability users. There are top class ability users amongst their government and criminals, constituting a very complex and delicate domain. Although, because of that, there are very strict bodies monitoring ability users, they shouldn't be able to easily enter other countries."

I try to ask a question, but Dazai replies with a tilt of his head, "Indeed, there isn't a place on earth that criminal ability organisations can just easily illegally immigrate into. There must be some sort of insider. Or someone from within the country helping them."

"For them to specially come all the way to Japan, what do those gifted criminals want?"

"Who knows? We can only ask them. Having said that, I have a conjecture. These penniless guys have fled to a foreign land with no one to rely on. Putting it a little more bluntly – these guys need money to start up. Hence, they might be planning on seizing the Port Mafia's territory and smuggling networks and establish dominance.

This is highly possible. Criminal organisations that are down and out all seek the same thing – money, money, money!

But there's one thing I'm concerned about. Just as I am about to open my mouth and bring this up—

"Let me finish first," Dazai sees through my thoughts, speaking up to stop me. "I know what Odasaku wants to say. For a criminal mob in shambles, those soldiers are too experienced, is what you're concerned about, right? I thought so as well. The sniper and the observer pair's battle movements are a clever tactic rarely seen around these parts. Actually, these people are of military origins. According to the reports, the head of the organisation is a powerful ability user and soldier who led his subordinates into hundreds of battles with his power. It shouldn't be too long before we get more details. In short, don't underestimate them. If they launch a coordinated attack on an

organisation-wide level, even the Port Mafia's bases will be shaken."

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Some translation notes. This is proving to be a really difficult chapter to translate! I try not to alter the general sentence structure of things as well, but I have to make some concessions here and there. These are the few lines I stumbled at or generally just want to explain some liberties that I took with transalting.

I tell the kids I look forward to the 'next time'. - The original line reads “对于孩子们【下一次一定会收给你】的这句话，我表示期待” which is more indirect in nature, and the kids actually say something more like “next time, we'll definitely show you!” and to these words, he expresses he's awaiting it. that's a more literal way of reading it.

these guys need money to start up - They're actually talking about needing money to “get through customs”, which we took as a more figurative manner of speech.

Also, the Dragon's Head Rush was written as 龙头拼 which I honestly took a very literal translation of. If anyone wants to offer a more correct translation of this, I'll be very grateful!

Also, if you notice a lot of the way I write these sentences, they're always like x person with x thing at x position, I swear it's because of the way Chinese is written and I'm trying to keep to it so it doesn't necessarily flow as well as it should in English.

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 2, Part 3)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/146233290512/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Please thank double kat [@nakaharachuyaa](#) and [@mlntyoonqi](#) for proofreading, for which they have my eternal gratitude.

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“Does the leader know about this?”

“It’s already been reported to him,” Dazai’s replies with a helpless expression, “In the end, I was appointed as the battle strategist and frontline commander to tackle Mimic. I’ve already settled some matters and set up a few simple mousetraps. It shouldn’t be long until the war begins to show signs of activity.

Mimic went through all the trouble to steal weapons and plan a trap – they wouldn’t just leave with a tip of their hat and a ‘Good work.’ As Dazai says, there will be a war, and the scale of it will be even greater.

“But the root of all questions is,” I pause, “Shouldn’t the government bodies have investigated and acted against a gifted criminal organization like Mimic?”

There are many people gifted with abilities in this world. Dazai and I are two of those people. The kinds of abilities differ from person to person, but there are a proportion of ability users with highly lethal abilities as well.

To secretly monitor such dangerous ability users, the government specially set up a department that works day and night. Of course, these government agents are all ability users, a force to be reckoned with.

“Are you referring to the Ministry of Home Affairs’ ‘Special Ability Department’?” Dazai tilts his head. “The problem is that the Special Ability Department is a secret organisation that rarely shows its face. On that note, the Port Mafia would also one hundred percent be classified as a gifted criminal organisation. For all we know, wouldn’t they think that having the Port Mafia and Mimic to kill each other off is a great opportunity, while they sit on the sidelines to watch?

It is as Dazai says. If the Special Ability Department committed themselves to taking out gifted criminal organisations, they would be coming for the mafia first.

Ango once mentioned that the Special Ability Department does have very powerful gifted government agents, but because their policy is to have only a few elites, if they were to enter an all-out war with the Port Mafia, their forces will not succeed unscathed. The Special Ability Department will also suffer casualties. To avoid such a situation, they have kept to monitoring the Port Mafia’s activities and avoid head-on clashes. Of course, if regular citizens get hurt, they will act as necessary.

I still have one more unspeakable question.

“What about Ango?”

Dazai doesn’t reply immediately, silently sipping freshly brewed coffee. Dazai needs some time to prepare for this question.

“We can pretty much say for certain that the code to the weapons store was leaked out through Ango.” Dazai says quietly, gaze remaining on the coffee mug. He eyes me for a moment, as though trying to read my expression.

I don’t say a word.

“To avoid internal conflict in the organisation, individual codes are given out. And then—“

“When Mimic raided the store, the code they used was the same as Ango’s code, right?”

I cross my arms. The missing pieces of the puzzle are slowly starting to fall together, revealing something I couldn’t even begin to imagine.

“Hey, Dazai.” I take a seat beside Dazai. In that moment, it felt like I was sitting in the bar with Ango when it was the three of us drinking together, as though nothing had changed. “Is there any possibility that someone is playing the situation to set Ango up?”

“The percentage isn’t zero. That sort of possibility always exists,” Dazai replies, although his tone suggests that he doesn’t believe his own words. “If someone within the mafia joined forces with Mimic, it might be possible. But I can’t think of anyone else who would stand to gain from doing that.”

Dazai shakes his head. As for myself, I am of a similar opinion.

The only thing we can do is to find Ango as soon as possible and ask for the truth. We have no way of predicting if this will end well or not.

The mafia’s intelligence agent – Sakaguchi Ango.

Why would Ango want to betray the organisation?

During former intelligence wars, in order to get a member of the enemy organisation to betray them, money, sex, family, self-esteem, a sense of belonging could all become an obstacle. As long as all of these are struck down, the other party would agree to defect. So what is Ango’s reason for defecting and seeking refuge with Mimic?

To find the answer, I look beside me at Dazai.

Dazai continues to keep his head low, in deep thought. His expression—

Dazai is—

“—Hahaha!”

Laughing.

“I initially thought it was just a normal criminal organisation – but if it’s an organisation that Ango would seek refuge in, that means they’re not the sort of people to come crying and begging for forgiveness after a little lecture. On top of that, Ango as an enemy won’t be an easy adversary, not at all. Isn’t this exciting? It’ll definitely force me into desperation, and then—“

“Dazai!”

Hearing my call, Dazai stops talking. It’s not that I want to say something, but just to get him to quit it.

There is no one who knows Dazai’s inner self.

In the mafia, no one will look at what’s in their colleagues. This is an unspoken rule. They will not open up the lid over one’s chest to look at their heart and comment at the darkness stuffed within. This is a merit of the mafia.

But maybe that is wrong. At least it is for the man sitting beside me. Perhaps someone should persistently tie Dazai up, open the lid over his chest and stuff the head of a vacuum cleaner in. They have to let Dazai, who should be screaming in pain and resisting, settle down. Following which, the difficult things in his heart must all be dragged out

under the sun and stepped on mercilessly.

However, there isn't a vacuum cleaner like that, neither is there something like a lid over one's chest, much less a person like that. Everything only exists as shapes that one's eyes can see, simply brushing past us.

The only thing mankind can do is to silently stand before the ravines between others.

"Then, I should be heading off." Dazai stands as he finishes.

"Dazai!"

I speak towards Dazai's back. Dazai turns his head.

I rub my hands together, gaze falling upon the empty plate and coffee mug, before raising it again, and say, "For you to think that way, is it because—"

Just as I am getting to it, Dazai's phone suddenly rings.

Dazai apologises softly and raises the phone to his ear, "It's me."

After a long while of Dazai listening to the voice from the phone, he suddenly smiles. With a reply of "Understood", he hangs up the phone and turns to me.

"The mouse has fallen into the trap."

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Translator's notes - please do not ask about that vacuum cleaner passage i'm still not very sure what the fuck odasaku was on

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 2, Part 4)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/146494355162/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Onwards! Thank you for the patience and for sticking with me. We hit over 500 followers the other day, and it's incredibly humbling. Thank you for all your support and kind words!

And thank you to @mIntyoonqi and @nakaharachuyaa for their hard work proofreading too!

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There is no divide between day and night in the concessions of Yokohama.

Previously a residential area for the garrison area, it has now become a common concession that has survived the influences of foreign consuls. The concession is run jointly by the Japanese military police and consulate in name, but the legal distinction is ambiguous because it contains countless grey areas. Aiming at the holes in the legal system, warlords, plutocrats, and criminals gather here from different countries like moths.

Even the military police cannot act rashly in Yokohama's concession. It is the extraterritorial "Devil's City". This is also a massive area in Yokohama where gifted criminals gather, and one of the reasons why its bad reputation spreads far and wide.

In one corner of Devil's City, there is an underground casino run by the Port Mafia.

The casino is nothing lively or fanciful. No matter how you look at it, it is an inconspicuous, shady casino surreptitiously hidden in the shadows. At least, that is how it looks like from the outside. This is not done without reason, but because the gambling that takes place here is all illegal.

The casino is situated in the basement of a shipyard, guarded by several gangsters. Gamblers who visit this place are first class financiers, political figures, and military officers. Doormen in double breasted coats are in charge of welcoming them in. Inside the basement casino, crystal chandeliers illuminate the brocade walls, wood parquet floors, and long fur carpets. The roulettes, blackjack tables, and jukeboxes playing Prohibition-era jazz music are lined up like silent sentinels. People hold a drink in one hand, squandering their money and enthusiastically engage in secret conversations at the same time. A bartender around forty years of age silently mixes cocktails at the bar in the corner.

Suddenly, soldiers in grey appear silently from the back door armed with assault rifles and sweep the place. Fragments of the walls and crystal chandeliers fly everywhere, landing on the heads of the gamblers.

The gamblers, like herbivores struck by lightning, fall into a state of severe panic. They trample upon each other without hesitation, flee in different directions, at a loss for what to do. This is what the soldiers planned for from the very beginning.

Amidst the chaos, the casino workers swiftly pull out machine guns from their hiding places. But before they can even raise them, they are shot in the chest by the soldiers, crumpling to the ground.

Five soldiers cut across the casino lobby without hesitation, charging into the manager's office. After swiftly killing the manager, they lift up the carpet on the floor.

A large electronic safe is installed beneath the floorboards. One of the soldiers produces a small piece of paper, following the code written on it and punching in the numbers on the keypad. The sound of gears turning can be heard from within the safe. The safe door opens.

The soldiers confirm what is within the safe.

The safe is empty.

The soldiers look bewildered.

At the same moment, the security alarm rings throughout the entire building, and the heavy fire prevention shutters begin to lower. Realising the situation, the soldiers open fire at the shutters leading to the exit, but there is no way to pierce the heavy, bulletproof shutters.

Seconds later, the sprinklers on the ceiling start up, spilling fluids into the room. The fluid sprinkles equally onto the bodies of the soldiers, employees, and the gamblers who couldn't escape in time.

It's not water that's being sprinkled out. It is a white fluid that evaporates upon contact with clothing or any other surfaces, drifting through the air. The gamblers and employees that breathe in this gas start coughing violently. The soldiers immediately cease their breathing, but it is too late.

One by one, the people in the room collapse. Almost no one can do anything, clutching their throats, curling up their bodies and passing out. It is a coma-inducing poisonous gas that affects the respiratory tract, but is not lethal.

One of the soldiers, having understood the current situation, raises his gun and fires towards his head. Fresh blood and brain matter splatter onto the wall, forming the last physical memory of his life. The remaining four soldiers, however, are unable to make a similar judgement calmly. They fall to the ground with the gamblers.

There is one difference between the gamblers and the soldiers.

The soldiers will not be able to hope to die with such ease.

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Again, apologies for the delay. This week and next are pretty packed for me, and again, I have about another two parts getting proofread as we speak, so soon! I'm really excited for everyone else to read the next couple of parts; you're in for a ride.

Also, a t/n! Concession in this case refers to a piece of land that has been conceded/given up. You can think of it as "settlement" too, if it helps. Bless the English language for being confusing, eh?

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 2, Part 5)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/146579506530/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Another round of thanks for double kat @mlntyoonqi and @nakaharachuyaa the best proofreaders I could ever ask for what would I do without them

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I arrive at a small firm by the bay.

This was once where Ango worked when he was unsuccessful, before he became an intelligence agent handling classified information. Everyone has gone through such times.

I enter the firm, declaring my purpose. The guard and person in charge bring me in with smiles on their faces. The mafia isn't entirely made up of steel, guns, and explosives, it also needs talents like these.

This accounting firm takes the money obtained by the mafia through illicit means and launders it. Before he was recruited by the mafia three years ago, Ango worked as a helper here.

I am brought into a secret room with no windows. The dark room concealed behind a wall is filled with bookshelves protecting the mafia's secret assets, money laundering books and other records. A desk is placed in the middle. There is nothing else other than the single light-bulb swaying lightly from the ceiling.

After bringing me to the stack room, the person in-charge says in a hoarse voice, "Now then, I'll get back to work."

Because he mentioned 'work', I shoot him a glance as confirmation, but the table in his office next door only has a shogi book and a small bonsai on it.

"Thank you," I say to the person in-charge. "Smoke from the war has already reached headquarters. Be extra careful, no matter what you do."

"There is only old data and bonds that can't be exchanged for cash left here. The enemy's attack will only be in vain."

The person in-charge smiles. He is an elder treasurer guarding the mafia's accounts. With his gut feeling, he can determine where the flames of the war will head towards.

"Nice workplace," I say to the person in-charge's back after surveying the room, "I should request to be transferred here."

The person in-charge smiles bitterly, "Young people who say such things can't handle it and leave after three days because it's too boring."

I thank the person in-charge and part ways with him, turning to the bookshelves once again.

This place has Ango's records. Accountants are a group of people who normally wear their attention to detail like clothes and walk around. Moreover, since they are handling the mafia's secret records, they have been requested to memorise everything that happens on the job in detail. In the event that something happens and they are killed, the job can still be handed over to the next person without disruption.

I pull out the business diary of the accountant in-charge back then. Among them, this accountant paid great attention to detail. Just one month's worth of records is as long as a short novel, like a love poem to the mafia.

According to the records, Ango was once an information broker and computer hacker.

The Ango back then was full of confidence, assembling a gang and planning to steal an enterprise's funds. He disguised himself as a related party and opened the bank's safe, planning to steal all their stocks and exchange them for cash. Had they succeeded, Ango and his partners would have earned a huge sum of money. However, that is money stained with blood.

That safe and those bonds belonged to one of the mafia's puppet companies. Ango and the rest have essentially stolen out of the mafia's wallet from its pocket. It doesn't need to be said that Ango and company suffered at the hands of hunting dogs – they do not bark, much less make a sound. They are the black hunting dogs who wield guns and chase their targets at night to the ends of the earth.

The gang members, spirits all but crushed, opened fire on one another out of paranoia that someone would come forth and tell on them. They had long since exited the stage. But Ango continued to flee on his own. By getting a hold of the movements of the mafia's tracking forces beforehand, he planned and continued to flee on Yokohama's streets. That was a full six months.

To continue fleeing from Yokohama's mafia's tracking force for six months is something that would stun even the government's intelligence agents. He probably managed to get a hold of and exploit the mafia's information networks, occasionally sending out false reports and causing chaos on the opponent's end.

However, destiny must end one day. No one is able to escape the darkness forever. Ango, caught in the sewers of the slums, had already prepared for his death. However, Ango was brought before the leader, who had absolutely no intention of harming Ango and his superb intelligence operations skills. After which, Ango started his second life.

—The first act of the play is a man who has climbed up the ranks in this world of darkness. Looking at the information, one cannot perceive Mimic's shadow behind his back.

If that is the case, does that mean that Ango and Mimic's encounter was after this?

As I continue to flip the pages and read the information, I notice a startling entry.

Two years ago, one year after Ango joined the mafia, Ango had earned the trust of the organisation and travelled to Europe. His aim was to negotiate business with a local car theft agency. However, for the next two months, there was no word from Ango for reasons unknown. The Ango that returned two months later was no different. The reason he gave was he had a misunderstanding with the local organisation and was on the run as a criminal. Upon investigation, Europe's car smuggling organisation had been reported on around the same time. The Port Mafia came to the conclusion that Ango had been dragged into this and hence did not continue to pursue the matter.

However, thinking about it now, it seems strange. It's hard to believe that Ango would have been unable to get himself out of this small misunderstanding and spent two months on the run.

No one is able to confirm what Ango's movements were during those two months in Europe.

Putting this together with the information on hand, one can confirm that he met with Mimic during this time and established a contract.

That is to say – established a contract to become a double agent.

From that moment on, does that mean Mimic had already planned to head down the path of attacking the Port Mafia?

I close the files, letting myself calm down while in deep thought. The room is very silent, with only the sound of cars outside driving past, separated by a layer of film, entering my ears.

I have this strange feeling that something isn't quite right.

Ango joined the mafia, then colluded with Mimic. When the time was ripe, conflict broke out between the two organisations. Everything has come together too perfectly, like two computers playing chess. There are absolutely no surprising actions or any elements contrary to our expectations. This makes me feel far from relieved.

I survey the room Ango once worked in. I remember that event.

Back then, Ango sat at this very seat. Sitting in this chair, elbows leaning against the table, silently looking at me with a look of displeasure.

This is the place Ango and I met for the first time.

The Ango back then was arrogant and carried an unamused expression, exuding a displeased aura from his entire body that screamed "I'm not someone meant to sit around here".

I remember that sight. At that time, what was the first thing that Ango said?

Ango indeed—

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[June 28th \(149\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 2, Part 6)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/146629955197/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

This is by far my favourite part to translate thus far and I hope you will think the same too! Much thanks goes to @nakaharachuyaa and @mlntyoonqi for their speedy proofreading as well as @fukasenanauro for the kanji help!

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“Could you not come any closer? It stinks!”

Ango leans his elbows against the table, speaking with a look of displeasure on his face.

Dazai and I have not spoken a word, merely standing at the entrance, unmoving. A strange silence falls upon the accounting firm's secret room.

By word of mouth, I've learnt that the youth is a newcomer by the name of Sakaguchi Ango. But this is the first time I've been able to put name to face.

Dazai and I look at each other.

Indeed, Dazai and I are covered in a strong, foul stench because we had just returned after finishing a job. That is the smell of petroleum, rust, and blood. My nose had long given up relaying this information to my brain.

At that time, the Dragon's Head Rush had just gotten into full swing. There hasn't been a night where gunshots don't ring through the streets, where fresh blood isn't mixed in the sewer waters. Bodies of gang members are piled high. As for the military police, there isn't enough manpower to stop the fighting, let alone go down to the scene to carry out forensic analyses.

Dazai and I had been ordered by the higher ups to handle the corpses of Port Mafia members who had died fighting. This involved taking photos of the corpses and reclaiming their belongings. If these items were to fall into the hands of the police, they would be classified as evidence under the Organised Crime Prevention Act and cause trouble.

Having said that, this isn't a job that one puts their heart into during times of fighting. On top of that, the site of the gunfight is situated in Yokohama's concession's waste disposal site. The police would not approach a place where sludge and industrial waste has been dumped illegally, much less the residents nearby.

Because of that, Dazai and I are covered in dirt and sludge from head to toe. The stench we are covered in is so strong that stray cats in a one kilometre radius would run away.

“It stinks to the point of wanting to cut one's nose off,” Dazai once said on the job, his face scrunched up.

Ango took one glance at us, speaking in a rude tone.

“After you place the items from the corpses on the table, step back, and please do not speak before I ask questions.”

We do as he says.

“You're new, right?” Dazai opens his mouth. “Apologies, could I use the washroom? As you have already pointed out, our bodies are very smelly—”

“I already said, please do not talk.”

Ango interrupts Dazai. Dazai falls silent, mouth agape, interrupted words left hanging.

Although he looks no different from a youth, at that time, Dazai was already the strongest candidate for the next executive. Even though he's a newcomer at the accounting firm, Dazai is not someone who can be rejected or told to "shut up".

From the bags that we handed to him, Ango retrieves the collected items and inspects them one by one – identity cards, keys, watches, knives, and guns. Following the photos we had taken, he records them on the books one by one.

I don't know what Ango is doing. I always thought that once the deceased's name was confirmed, their belongings would be burned and discarded. What is this newcomer doing, checking them one by one and recording them?

"What are you doing?" I enquire curiously.

"I've already said, please do not talk." Ango replies as he shakes his notebook. "Can't you tell from looking? I'm making records. Isn't that obvious?"

"I see," I say.

"Report your name!"

Beside me, Dazai suddenly shouts without warning. I jump in fright.

Ango's gaze shifts from the data to Dazai. After a moment of silence, he says, "I am Sakaguchi... Ango."

"U... Uahahahahaha!"

For some reason, Dazai is laughing out loud, smile plastered on his face.

"...What's with that disgusting smile?"

"Ango, you're an interesting person. Even if you do that, the boss will only find it annoying. It's a waste of effort and funds. I don't think your evaluations will be of help."

"Are you saying that you know what I'm doing?" Ango looks surprised.

"You're writing a record for the deceased's lives, are you not?"

Ango seems startled by Dazai's words, looking at Dazai as though noticing him for the first time.

"When did you steal a glance at my notebook?"

"I didn't! There isn't a need to look for it to be clear, no?"

I don't understand what exactly is clear – but this sort of thing happens often when together with Dazai, so I silently watch how things unfold.

Ignoring Ango, Dazai walks closer to him with a swagger. "The fiercer the fighting, the more the deceased will become just a number. A few people died yesterday, a few people died today. They will gradually exist as nothing more than lost money or objects. There will be no individuality, no soul, and nothing to honour the dead. Yet, you are planning to oppose this notion. Can you read out a section?"

Ango looks at Dazai with a spiteful expression for some time. In the end, his gaze shifts back to the data and he begins to read.

“During the executive raid that happened by the waste disposal site last night, there were four casualties. Specifically, Umeki Kouto, Saegusa Shoukichi, Ishige Miroku, and Utagawa Kazuma — Umeki was originally a military policeman who was framed. Shouldering the crime of killing their colleagues, he was taken off the force and joined the mafia. He was skilled at commanding and leading this small group. Both of his parents are deceased, and he has a much younger brother, but they do not keep in contact. Umeki didn’t really kill his colleagues, but no one will ever know that now. —The next is Saesuga. He inherited his mafioso father’s mantle, joining the mafia from a young age. Skilled at settling disputes, it’s said that shops in the turf have excellent things to say of him. His dream was once to become an executive. —Next is Ishige. She was born in a brothel, raising her ill parents. Although her vision was not good, she had sensitive hearing, and was able to hear the enemy’s attack one step ahead of others. The fact that our side didn’t completely perish in this attack can largely be credited to her. The last, Utagawa, was originally a hitman from an enemy organisation. After the organisation collapsed, he joined to fight under the mafia’s banner. He had a wife and a child, but his family members were completely unaware of the fact that he was a killer and a mafioso. Neither will they know from this day forth.

I imagine the four people being recited out. They come to life before my eyes — It hasn’t come to that point yet, but I can feel myself coming closer to their existence. But today, they are all dead.

Ango closes the information, and speaks.

“They have all obtained peace, peace that no one can take away from them. All the reports being handled here are scars left upon their lives. The report of ‘The Death of Four’ will never be able to encapsulate their lives. I started gathering these reports during my free time at work. The eighty-four Port Mafia members who have died since the fighting began have all left behind similar records.”

I am speechless.

Because I can easily imagine how heavy a workload that must be.

“Does the boss know about this job of yours — collecting and writing down reports that have no tactical value?”

“Yes, I always bring the sorted information to the leader every week. At the beginning, he found it troublesome, but now, he thinks that ‘This is an important source to understand everything that goes on in the organisation’, so he reads them very happily.”

What started as a report collecting job in his spare time had now become his primary duty by the leader’s instruction. Was it because of the leader’s direct order that this job to look for corpses was specially assigned to Dazai, executive candidate?

“Eh, Odasaku, isn’t it interesting?” Dazai unceremoniously pats Ango’s back. “Normally, there wouldn’t be such a mafioso, it’s a serious waste of talent.”

“Hence, please do not come closer to me. The stench will rub off on me.” Ango frowns.

“Odasaku, you’re thinking the same, right? Do you want to look at these reports?”

I nod, “I will buy them as priced.”

“This isn’t for sale! Seriously, what is up with you two? Hindering me from my work, I’m very busy! And it stinks! It smells like rotten *tsukudani*!”

“Ehhh? Even if it’s rotten *tsukudani*, what does that matter? Moreover, rotten *tsukudani* goes very well with sake.”

“Is that so? I never knew.”

"That's not possible! Please don't tell such outright lies!"

"Hm, then... A-Actually, rotten *tsukudani*... doesn't taste too bad, right?"

"I didn't mean that you should be embarrassed about it!"

"Whenever we bring this topic up, I always feel like having a drink."

"That's not a bad idea, let's go to the usual. Let's bring this accountant along as well. Is that okay?"

"That's okay."

"I've already told you, I'm very busy—"

"Odasaku, I have a method to free him from his busyness. As long as we hug him from both sides and smear our stench, sludge, and oil onto him furiously, scientifically, he won't be able to continue working for today!"

"I see."

"W-What are you saying! Are you threatening me?!"

"Newcomer, mafia members do not threaten, only commit crimes. Ah, Odasaku, you take the right."

"Understood."

"Wait, this is my only presentable set of clothes... Stop, I'll get angry... Uaaaaaaaah——?!"

.....

Later, Ango, Dazai, and I go to the bar and start chatting.

It's as though the hierarchy at work doesn't exist and we are just drinking and chatting together. About things that happen on the street, alcohol, people we've met; there are no topics we are particularly passionate to share between us. Even so, we can talk endlessly without stopping about even the small things. Like soldiers that meet on the desert battlefield serendipitously, encircling the campfire, we quietly carry certain things forward, quietly drinking, enjoying the insignificant times spent together.

Even though we live in such a world, such relationships are hard to find, just like the golden palace in the jungle. Once such a relationship collapses, it is probably impossible to build such a relationship again with other people.

Yet—

The old pistol, the code to the safe.

The relationship between us is falling apart as fast as one's eyes can see.

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Tsukudani is usually seafood, meat, or seaweed cooked and simmered in soy sauce and mirin. Ango is specifically referring to fish tsukudani in this, but it flowed better to just call it tsukudani.

Some stuff for the timeline - If Ango joined three years prior, when Dazai was 15, and suffice to say that means that Dazai wasn't even 16 when he was being considered for executive. If that isn't terrifying I don't know what is.

[June 29th \(146\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 2, Part 7)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/146730295392/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Go to your proofreaders [@nakaharachuyaa](#) and [@mlntyoonqi](#) right now and thank them thank them so much for all their help. Scans are by [@akutagawaprize!](#) (all scans [here](#))

Warnings for violence ahead. Shit is going downhill from this point on.

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Dazai walks down the stairs.

These stairs lead towards the dark basement.

In the basement, white fog silently seeps in through the cracks in the stone walls, filling the basement room with a lake-like fog. The black walls bring warm air, absorbing the screaming and hopelessness, giving off a dark radiance.

This is the mafia's underground prison. Many people come in alive, but very few leave alive.

Many people are brought here for different reasons. For some, it is because it is well-equipped with interrogation tools. For some, it is because there is no way to rescue your comrades from this place. For some, cleaning and washing the blood is more relaxing than being above ground.

Wordlessly, Dazai passes through the basement, heading towards a special cell in the depths.

The special cell is a rectangular room of approximately 10-*ping*. The low iron gate is the only entrance and exit. Other than that, there are no windows for lighting. There are handcuffs and chains reminiscent of prisons in the Middle Ages dangling from the walls.

A total of three corpses lie in the cell. They haven't been dead for long, as seen from the blood slowly pooling on the floor. Now, with their master having passed on, they have tried repeatedly to leave this depressing room, to no avail.

The deceased are Mimic soldiers.

Having been apprehended after inhaling sleeping gas, they were sent here in order to be interrogated by the mafia.

"I want to hear an explanation." Dazai says.

There are four mafiosos in the room as well. Three of them are subordinates that chased down the sniper in the back alley with Dazai. The other is a small, thin boy dressed in a black coat.

"The Mimic soldiers who attacked the mafia's casino were caught after inhaling sleeping gas and brought here." A subordinate in a suit replies while pushing his sunglasses up, "Originally, we were going to interrogate them here to force out information about their comrades. The poison for suicide hidden in their molars were already removed."

"I know everything up to this point, because I planned it. What I'm asking is what happened after."

"One of the soldiers woke up earlier than we had expected." Sunglasses' subordinate replies vaguely, "Before we could get the handcuffs on, that soldier had already snatched our guns, shooting his fellow soldiers to stop them from leaking any information. After that, he turned to attack us, but—"

"I took care of him."

The boy in the black coat finishes.

Dazai looks at him.

The boy in the black coat's large eyes turn to look at Dazai, his gaze sharp as he stares back.

"Is there a problem?"

"So that's how it is. Ah, there isn't a problem." Dazai continues to glance at the boy in the black coat, continuing, "So, you beat down these indomitable, scary soldiers and protected your comrades. Akutagawa, you've really done well!"

Dazai starts to walk towards the boy in the black coat named Akutagawa.

"If you didn't have your ability, it would have been impossible to defeat such a strong opponent in one strike. You're worthy of being my subordinate. Luckily, because of you, all three of the enemy soldiers we caught are now dead. Those soldiers were caught after painstakingly laying down traps. Our leads have been cut short now. If there could have been one survivor, we could interrogate them for all sorts of precious information: the enemy's base, the enemy's motive, their next target, their commander's name and origin, as well as the commander's ability. What a great job indeed!"

"You don't need any reports – Trash like this can be ripped apart all by myself—"

Without letting him finish, Dazai swings a fist at Akutagawa's face.

Akutagawa is sent flying. His head hits the concrete floor and rebounds with a dull thud.

"You must have thought I wanted to hear excuses. Sorry for the misunderstanding." Dazai rubs the fingers of his punching fist as he speaks.

"Tch..."

Akutagawa groans. Having taken a hard hit on his head, his entire body sways, unable to get up.

"You! Lend me your gun."

Dazai says to the subordinate in a suit. Although the subordinate doesn't quite understand, he still hands the pistol over to him.

From the pistol he receives, Dazai takes out bullets from the pistol's magazine, loading only three bullets in, before loading the magazine back into the gun.

Following which, he raises the muzzle, aiming towards the fallen Akutagawa.

"Among my friends, there's one man raising orphans by himself." Dazai points the gun at him as he continues. "Akutagawa, if the person who had picked your starving self up from the slums had been Odasaku, he definitely wouldn't give up on you and would have patiently taught you. That is the 'right' way. However, I am a man who is hated by 'the right way'. A man such as myself will do this to useless subordinates."

As he finishes speaking, Dazai mercilessly pulls the trigger.

Three gunshots, three flashes of light, three empty bullet shells roll on the ground with a crisp sound.

"..."

Sweat rolls down Akutagawa's forehead.

“Ooh—If you put your heart to it, you’ll be able to achieve it, no?”

The bullets stop dangerously before Akutagawa.

Akutagawa used his ability to block the bullets.

Despite having used his ability to escape the shots and hold onto his life, Akutagawa’s expression doesn’t show signs of relaxing.

“I’ve taught you quite a few times already, haven’t I?” Dazai says, seemingly happy, “Just slicing up poor captives isn’t all of your ability. It needs to be used like this for defending as well.”

Akutagawa’s ability, “Rashomon”, is the ability to manipulate his black coat, bringing it to life and changing its shape into a blade or sharp teeth to rip enemies apart. Dazai believed that according to that logic, it should be possible to use the blade to rip apart space itself, creating a split to prevent bullets from advancing.

“Until now... such a method of defending has never succeeded.” Akutagawa speaks in a weak, hoarse voice. Creating a split in space has used up the most part of his energy.

“But now it has succeeded just like that, congratulations.”

Akutagawa furrows his brows. A look of emotional tension crosses Akutagawa’s face.

“The next time you screw up, I’ll hit you twice and fire five shots, understood?”

Dazai’s tone is colder than ice. Akutagawa wants to retort, but quiets down under the pressure of Dazai’s narrowed gaze.

“Now then, disciplining talentless subordinates ends here. Get to work. Try investigating the corpses, you might be able to find something.”



Dazai instructs the three subordinates awaiting orders on the side. One of the subordinates replies hesitantly, “May I ask... What part of the corpses is there to investigate?”

“Everything! Do you even have to ask?” Dazai says with disapproval. “Find out clues about their base. The soles of their shoes, the scraps in their pockets, remnants of food, attachments on their clothes; they’re all clues. Really... All my subordinates think that a mafioso’s job is just to torture and kill their enemies. At this rate, Odaaku just might be able to solve it all by himself.”

“Oda Sakunosuke... I know that man.” The subordinate in sunglasses says cautiously. “Please forgive me for speaking out of turn, but Dazai-san... I saw that man cleaning the back of the office a few days ago. I absolutely do

not believe that someone like him is suited to be Dazai-san's friend, neither is he someone who can compete with the enemy this time."

Dazai's eyes widen at the subordinate.

"Are you for real? Odasaku and I are not suited to be friends?" Dazai carries an expression of utter bewilderment.

"Yes..."

The other subordinates nod their heads as well.

"You're all idiots!" Dazai looks dumbfounded. With a bitter smile, he warns, "Listen carefully, for your own good, I'll give you a piece of advice. It's best you don't provoke Odasaku. Absolutely not! If Odasaku gets angry from within his heart, the five people in this room will be killed before they can even pull out their guns."

The subordinates are speechless. Akutagawa looks at Dazai with a stiff expression.

"Odasaku is scarier than any mafioso when he gets serious. Akutagawa, you'd never be able to win against Odasaku, not in a hundred years."

"What bullshit is this..." Akutagawa says quietly, gritting his teeth. "That's not possible, Dazai-san, who do you take me—"

Dazai ignores what he has to say.

"Alright, get to work! The enemy is troublesome, but if we don't hurry and settle this fight, once the Special Ability Department comes to put out the fire, things will become even more troublesome."

Akutagawa's hands are still on the stone floor as he keeps glaring at Dazai.

"....."

That hateful gaze, while directed towards Dazai, seemed to be directed at himself as well.

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Translation notes: *ping* is an East Asian form of measurement. Google says it's equivalent to 33 square meters, or 355 square feet.

I had a big problem with "emotional tension". The literal translation of it would be more: *A look of anxiousness of the moment before one's feelings implode crosses Akutagawa's face*, which is clumsy and sounds horrible in the English language (in English's defense, it sounds pretty crummy in Chinese as well.)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 2, Part 8)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/146888324687/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

I was hoping to post the last part in one go but alas it's worth nearly two parts so please have the second last instalment of this chapter for now! Much thanks to [@nakaharachuyaa](#) [@mlntyoonqi](#) and [@bananasaurr](#) for their proofreading work!!

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I leave the accounting firm.

I think about Ango, in some corner of this city, slowly being tainted by sin.

Perhaps the sinners are us - the mafia, while Ango and Mimic are the partners of justice exacting punishment. I would even say that such a conjecture has some logic to it. I, Dazai, the leader, and everyone else should maybe assume responsibility for our sins and die in loneliness and remorse. Perhaps that is proof of the world's fairness.

I think about all this. After I leave the accounting firm, I receive a call from Dazai.

"Aah, Odasaku, apologies, but I'll get straight to the point. We've already gotten a lead. Can you rush over to the location immediately?"

According to what Dazai says, a wilted leaf of a broad-leaved tree had been found stuck on the bottom of a Mimic's soldier's shoe.

Such a perennial broad-leaved tree wouldn't have wilted leaves dropping at this time. It is only when the tree itself withers that wilted leaves appear. However, perennial plants do not wither so easily.

The only possible way is the use of weedkiller, causing the tree to wither by manmade methods. Hence, Dazai's subordinates looked into cases of professionals using weedkiller to clear trees in the recent months.

There was only one case of the clearing of such broad-leaved trees in the outskirts of Yokohama.

Due to urban planning and expansion works for existing roads, the professionals had allowed for broad-leaved trees along either side of the road to wither. The location is in a valley area, with no notable facilities in the vicinity.

There is only a weather station nearby, which has been abandoned for more than ten years. It has already dilapidated into ruins that no one would approach.

It is spacious, inconspicuous, and allows for the import of goods. With no foothold in this country, if Mimic were to pick a location, it would be the best choice.

The time is evening. I drive along the expressway towards my destination. The sky along the horizon is coloured purple and orange. The calls of seabirds can be heard somewhere in the distance.

After cutting through the unpaved road in the mountainous area, I get out of the car midway and begin to walk. Carving a path through the dense weeds, I finally see a reinforced building in the darkness, illuminated by the sunset.

It is a three storey building in ruins. What was perhaps originally a white outer wall is covered with ivies. With the help of rain, wind, and time, the paint has almost completely peeled off. The center of the building has an observation tower for watching the happenings in the sky, the top of which is connected to an observatory that looks like an

ornamental ball.

The dirt and trees absorb sound, rendering the surroundings as silent as the universe. There doesn't seem to be any sign of people hiding.

After some thought, I decide to investigate the abandoned building before Dazai's subordinates arrive. I have a premonition.

If my premonition is right, there will be some information concerning Ango here.

That information absolutely should not be seen by other mafia members.

I part the weeds and enter the building. There is nothing on the first floor. Other than the peeling tiles, discarded rusty chairs, and the corpses of beetles, there is absolutely nothing. Wooden boards are hammered over the windows and sunset filters through the gaps in diagonal rays of light, illuminating the dust floating in the air.

There are footprints on the dusty, sandy floorboards. Military boots. It seems like people have gone in and out recently.

The stairs leading to the second floor look as though they are about to collapse. As I head towards the second floor, a small sound comes from somewhere in the building. Although no different from the sound of a cat turning over, it is enough for an idea to flash in my head.

I climb the stairs in big strides. There isn't a soul in sight on the second floor, nor on the third, as per my premonition.

I continue to run up the stairs, climbing towards the tower's observatory.

Upon climbing the stairs, in the small room, there is someone inside.

There is a person tied to a chair, unable to move.

Upon seeing me, the person shouts.

"Odasaku-san! You can't come here!"

Ignoring those words, I run to the person's side.

That person – Sakaguchi Ango – is trying to free the two hands tied behind his back, but the rope is tied so tightly that he cannot move. I circle around behind Ango's back and prepare to loosen the rope.

"Why have you come here! This facility is the enemy's base!"

"I sensed your cry for help." I try to undo the knot, but it is fairly stubborn.

"I didn't cry for help!"

"Really?" I stick my fingers into the knot. With some strained effort, the knot begins to show signs of loosening.

"Let me deduce why you feel embarrassed. Mimic has found out about your status as a spy, am I right?"

"...! That's..." Ango is at a loss for words.

"Everyone in the mafia is of the belief that you are a Mimic spy that infiltrated the mafia. However, it's the opposite. *Sakaguchi Ango is a mafia spy that infiltrated Mimic.*"

Ango stares at me with wide eyes.

“Mimic had a sniper aimed at Ango’s room to prevent the old pistol in Ango’s room from being stolen. But why didn’t they just have the sniper target the mafia leader? The reason is simple – because you lied to Mimic and told them you ‘don’t know where the leader is’. Why did you do that? Because what you can say and cannot say about the mafia is decided by our leader.”

Ango closes his eyes tightly, gritting his teeth, as though suppressing feelings welling up from his heart. Finally, he opens his eyes and speaks.

“Odasaku-san, please leave quickly! I’ve already failed my mission.” Ango gestures upstairs with his chin. “A time bomb has been put in place upstairs. They plan to burn me, a traitor, into a crisp.”

“Look! You are crying for help, aren’t you?” I give up trying to undo the knot, pulling out my gun. “Try to keep your body away from the chair.”

I take aim at the target, firing two shots at the knot. The entire chair shakes, and the rope flies off.

“Let’s go! How much time till the bomb goes off?”

“It wouldn’t be surprising if the entire building exploded any second!”

I support Ango and run down the stairs. Ango seems to have gone through some terrible things before he was tied to that chair. He staggers with a hand pressed to his flank. Despite this, we run down the stairs at full speed, nearly tumbling down the stairs.

When the bomb explodes, we have almost left the building.

The first to reach is the blast.

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[July 4th \(131\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 2, End)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/146937788441/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

We've made it to the halfway mark! Much thanks to [@nakaharachuyaa](#), [@mlntyoonqi](#), and [@bananasaurr](#) for the swift proofreading on this chapter!! Scan by [@akutagawaprize](#) (all scans [here](#))

Please consider purchasing the book! You can find it on the [official site](#) or [Kinokuniya](#) ([Chinese version](#) too!) for US (and Kino also has stores in other parts of the world, use the ISBN number).

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After which, hot air rushes through.

We leap forwards – or rather, fly forward from the blast – towards the weeds. The air is completely forced out of our lungs.

Fragmented rubble from the building rains down in large quantities. Although I want to dodge, I have been rendered immobile from the bomb's assault. Luckily, heavy metal hasn't flown over. Only lightweight wooden panels have been blown this far out. Still, countless debris, small and large, land on our bodies, striking our backs with unbearable pain.

I spend nearly a minute of time before my breathing returns to normal. Coughing, I brush the debris off my head. My vision flashes red for a moment, then white.

"Ango... Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm okay..."

Ango crawls out of the pile of rubble, turning his head to look at the building behind his back. I follow and turn my head as well. The building's second floor and up have been completely destroyed, leaving only the smell of burnt skeletons. Even the floorboards of the room that Ango was imprisoned in have been completely blown apart. This means that the opponent has used a large quantity of explosives. With this, it will be impossible to trace the enemy's footsteps again.

"How much does our leader know?" I ask Ango, gasping for air.

"Almost everything," Ango replies. "He is the only one in the mafia that knows about me infiltrating Mimic. This means that this is a fairly sensitive mission. The more people there are involved, the easier it is for the secret to be leaked out – These are the basic rules of highly classified information."

"How troublesome." I straighten my upper body and sit on a pile of rubble. "So that's why the leader asked me to look for Ango, in order to continue hiding the truth."

I am Ango's guarantor in the event he encounters danger during his spying activities. Without knowing anything, without lying to anyone, no matter where I am or what the situation is, I am a pawn that will save Ango without a doubt.

"I'm not the kind of person who is suited to escape from a bomb in such a bind," Ango says bitterly, shaking his head to clear his mind. "Mimic's response is as fast as an arrow. Because of that, I couldn't make any moves to protect my life. Aaah, I can see stars in my eyes. What is this?"

"I've already gotten used to it."

"I'd better report this as soon as possible." Ango rises. "Mimic's leader is a dangerous man. Callous, with the ability to command, and thirsty for a fight. He wants to completely annihilate the mafia. If it's for him, his subordinates are prepared to slice their own throats. I've actually seen some of them do so."

"What is the name of that leader?" I ask.

"Andre Gide. He's a highly gifted ability user himself. You can't go up against him. Especially you, Odasaku-san - the person who found the pistol in the safe was Odasaku-san, right?"

I reply, "That's right."

"That gun is an emblem. There is a special engraving on the hammer to prove that you are a member of Mimic. It took me a year to earn that gun."

Ango rises from the pile of rubble with a stagger, glancing towards the ravine's forest of weeds, as though trying to pinpoint the location of something.

"The conflict between Mimic and the mafia is now unavoidable. The heads of that group of people are only filled with fighting. Putting it bluntly, *anyone can be their opponent*. As long as they can take them to the battlefield, they are even willing to dance the jitterbug with the guard dogs of hell. If this isn't handled quickly, the entire city will—it hurts!"

The skin near Ango's temple opens and a trail of blood dribbles down. I offer a handkerchief, which Ango receives with thanks and uses to put pressure on the wound.

"What kind of people are Mimic?"

"They're soldiers... You probably guessed it already, but they are the remnant soldiers of a previous war. Unable to survive in a place off the battlefield, they are the "Grey Spectres" with no master. Until now, they are possessed by war—"

Ango suddenly looks towards the unpaved road and speaks.

"What is that?"

I follow Ango's gaze and look over. There is a blue *temari* rolling on the down-sloping stone path. It is a *temari* that little children throw around to play with. Did it fly out here from someplace because of the blast?

I pick up the *temari* as it rolls to my feet. It is a deep blue coloured *temari*. Although a little old, threads fraying, its beautiful geometric pattern is oddly captivating.

I twirl the *temari* in my hand. It is big enough to be held with both hands. I look over the bottom, but there doesn't seem to be anything special—

The ground begins to shake violently.

The ground suddenly comes closer to my eyes. After a moment, I realise I am gradually falling to the ground. Although I reach both hands out to hold myself, I still fall forwards. My vision begins to turn blurry, and a strong nauseating feeling permeates me.



I look at both of my hands, which are covered in a thick blue fluid. This is the same thing on the *temari*. The parts covered in the fluid have gone numb, and my brain sounds alarms of the highest level.

The vision ends.

I stand amidst the rubble.

The worst part is, despite seeing this vision, *I have already picked up the temari*.

I hastily fling the *temari* away, but it's too late. The same giddiness from before has already arrived. I wipe the blue fluid on my hands onto my jacket, but the sticky fluid has already passed through the skin and invaded my body.

My ability – “Flawless”, shows a few seconds of the future in my mind. The length of a vision is longer than five seconds, shorter than six seconds. Hence, I could predict the sniper attack, the explosion and various other movements, and move to dodge.

However, while noticing the dangers of the future, should I already fall into the trap – in the case of my current situation – even if I can predict it, there is no way for me to dodge. The time I have spent picking up the *temari* has already exceeded six seconds. It is too late.

No matter who the opponent is, they must be someone who knew about my ability. The number of possible people isn't many.

Breaking out in a cold sweat, I want to warn Ango, but I cannot produce a sound.

Black shadows wordlessly appear from behind Ango.

Four people... No, five people, all dressed in field operation uniforms as black as the night's darkness, wearing gas masks over their faces.

They're not from Mimic. The guns in their hands are not the old grey pistols, but the newest models of assault rifles. It's the Special Ops Forces.

Amongst the Black Special Ops Forces, one pats Ango's shoulder. Ango turns back and nods, as though saying “I know”.

“Odasaku-san, sorry for troubling you.”

Ango walks over, placing the handkerchief I'd lent him earlier in my hand. I can't even grip the handkerchief, much less ready myself to fight.

Ango pulls out white silk gloves from his pocket, putting it on his right hand. He uses that hand to pick up the blue coloured *temari*.

“You can report everything that has happened here – The insider information about Mimic is all true. If... If it's possible, I want you, Dazai, and I to drink together again. Same time, same place...”

The Black Special Ops Forces bump elbows with Ango, signalling to him. Ango replies with only his gaze, before revealing a hopeless smile and looks at me.

“Take care!”

From the corner of my eye, I can see Ango turning his body, leaving together with the Black Special Ops Forces. I am unable to move my neck, unable to move my line of vision. Darkness slowly draws near from both sides.

With my numb tongue, I say a few words towards Ango's disappearing back. As to what I said, I don't remember myself, but an indescribable loneliness fills my heart. My emotions feel like they're at the end of the universe.

They too are being swallowed by the darkness.

At this time, my consciousness disappears.

End of Chapter 2

[\[Next Chapter\]](#)

Translator notes: A *temari* is a toy ball, usually made of embroidered silk or fabric in general. Here's the kicker - they symbolise deep friendship and loyalty, and bright colours are meant to wish their recipient happy lives.

Again, I'll be taking a break for the most of this week. Expect the next instalment sometime next week.

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 3, Part 1)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/147229719042/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Thank you for 800 followers!! I'm making good progress through chapter three. It's only slightly shorter than the previous two chapters, so anticipate around 8 parts, maybe slightly less, and updates every one or two days. Thanks for the support!

As usual, much thanks to @nakaharachuyaa, @mlntyoonqi, and @bananasaurr the proofreading lights of my life.

It was raining.

I was seated.

Time passed slowly and indefinitely. All sound was sucked into the elusive sound of rain. Because of this, it felt like the entire world had become a ghost.

Raindrops fell diagonally before my eyes, covering the view. Everything looked blue. Fog from the mixture of rainwater and seaspray lingered in the air. A piece of glass separated me from the wet scenery.

This was a teahouse. At that time, I was fourteen years old.

I was reading a book.

It was an old book, its cover and edges tattered, part of it already destroyed. The print was dated, faded words visible everywhere.

I found that book at the site of one of my jobs as a hitman. Replacing the owner who no longer had a need to read it, I brought it back.

I flip the pages of the book.

My fourteen-year-old self was a lot more innocent than the me of today. I am a freelance hitman who has never slipped up on the job. The plutocrat and his family, who originally owned this book, have become nothing but filth on the wall of a murder scene.

I no longer remember why I'd taken that book. It was something, something small that piqued my interest. At that time, I didn't have the habit of reading books, but that book was different.

It was an old novel, a story set in some city with many characters. The characters were all weak and tiny, running to and fro over the smallest of matters. However, the story was oddly fascinating.

After the job ended, sitting at my regular seat at the teahouse I frequented and reading that novel became my daily homework routine. Hence, I had already read that book a fair number of times.

That day, I was reading that book as usual.

"Kid, you're always reading that book. Is it really that interesting?"

Suddenly, someone spoke to me. I raised my head.

A middle aged man stood before me in an upright posture. He was a thin man with a cheeky smile and a cane in hand. There was a short beard at the corners of his mouth. I had met this man before a few times at this shop.

I replied, "It's interesting."

The bearded man stared at me as if he was looking at something fascinating.

"You're such a strange kid. There are so many stories that are much more interesting than that novel in the world."

I looked at the man and didn't reply. Honestly speaking, I cannot express to the other party why I still read this book over and over again.

"Kid, where's the last volume of that book?"

I looked at the books on the table. The first and second volumes* were placed on the table.

There was a very big flaw in the novel, that is, I could only find the first and second volumes of it. Because of this, I do not know the ending of the story. I've searched every possible secondhand bookstore, but I haven't been able to find the last volume.

I replied, "I don't have the last volume."

"I understand now, you're a lucky kid. The last volume of that novel is terrible! After reading it, it'll make you feel like taking your brain out from your skull and washing it with water! For your own good, it's enough to just read the first and second volumes."

I replied, "That won't do."

"Then you write it." The bearded man said. "That is the only way to allow that novel to retain its completeness."

I was stunned. Before this, I had never thought of writing it myself.

"Writing novels is about writing people." The bearded man said, "How people live and how they die. The way I look at it, you have that qualification."

I did not reply. I did not think I had that qualification to; that day was just some free time after killing someone on the job.

But that man's words had a strange persuasiveness. The clear light in his eyes looked like they could carry on for light-years, and his voice bore the certainty of the earth itself. Before this, I had never met someone like that man.

I asked him what his name was, and the bearded man gave it. However, I have long forgotten that name.

A few days later, I headed to the teahouse at the same time and found a book at my usual seat.

There was a note stuck to the cover of the book. The note read, "Don't regret it."

It was the last volume.

That day, I spent the entire day finishing that book.

My thoughts were—

[\[Next\]](#)

Translation notes: For the book, "volumes" was probably the best word, but anyone who understands Chinese, this was written as 上中下集 i literally don't know how to put this across properly in English terms, they're like... one book but separate parts of sorts. This part is a little shorter than the other parts but stuff will start to pick up around

part 3.

July 11th (125)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 3, Part 2)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/147259754627/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Did I say an update a day I meant like two updates in a day because I get the kindest messages from people and you guys deserve it.

But my proofreaders @nakaharachuyaa @mlntyoonqi and @bananasaurr deserve it more please!!! Go thank them because I don't know what I did to deserve such great proofreaders.

[\[Previous\]](#)

When I wake up, I am on a bed.

My two arms are wrapped in bandages. Upon sitting up, the pain in my back from being caught in the explosion wakes me immediately and I let out a groan.

This is the hospital's single-person ward. It's very clean, absolutely empty, and quiet as a mortuary. A man in a black suit and sunglasses stands guard at the entrance. Upon meeting my eyes, he leaves the room wordlessly to call someone.

"Ahh, you've woken up, Odasaku. How are you feeling?" Not long after, Dazai walks in with a cheerful expression.

"Like I've gotten a hangover for the next fifty years in one breath." I reply, surveying my surroundings. "Did you find Ango?"

"No. My subordinates only found Odasaku on the ground when they got to the scene of the explosion. The enemy has disappeared without a trace. Akutagawa was distraught because he "missed the chance to kill the traitor". So Ango was there after all?"

Following this, I recounted what had happened at the ruins in all its entirety.

"Ango was caught, an explosion, Andre Gide, and the Black Special Ops Forces, huh..." Dazai presses his thumb to his lip, assuming a thinking stance. For around a minute, he remains like this, motionless. Dazai's eyes flash, as though chasing something other people cannot see. I wait quietly.

"The situation's happenings can be split into two categories." Dazai finally opens his mouth. "One being the criminal organisation Mimic's attack, the other being Ango and the Black Special Ops Forces' secret movements."

"Are the Black Special Ops Forces and Mimic two different organisations?"

"They are different. To go one step further, this massive commotion resulted from a connection between three forces - the mafia, Mimic, and the Black Special Ops Forces. However, we can ignore the Special Forces for the time being. The danger is still Mimic. While Odasaku was bedridden, there have been six stores in the mafia's turf that were bombed. The damage is increasing every minute."

Apart from smuggling and the buying and selling of loot, the mafia also provides protection to shops and businesses and charges for the cost of protection. In the event those shops are attacked, the mafia will lose its financial foundation and the trust of its supporters.

The Western restaurant's uncle's face appears before my eyes. That store is one of the few shops I am responsible for.

"But the smaller shops have been lined at the back." Dazai says, as though having seen through to my inner heart. "Mimic is different from other enemies in that they are astonishingly fast and strike viciously, appearing without a sound. Even if we want to attack their base, they come and go without a trace, hence making it hard to launch a surprise attack. *It's as though we're dealing with ghosts.* They live up to their names as "Grey Spectres".

I think about Mimic's sniper and the ruins Ango was imprisoned in. Their existence does indeed carry an air of ghostliness.

A spectral commander.

Dead souls that want to swallow even the vicious mafia ghosts.

"I still don't have a good grasp over their attack style. But we can confirm that they really plan to raze the mafia's territory to a flatland. Even the ghouls of hell wouldn't do something as crazy as that. With Akutagawa as the lead, the combat squad's members have assembled themselves into teams to retaliate... But we don't even know the enemy commander's ability, which is rather disadvantageous."

"The ability user named Akutagawa... I remember he's your subordinate." I say, backtracking my memory. "I heard he has a very strong combat based ability... Even he's not enough?"

"Ah, Akutagawa is a sword without a scabbard." Dazai smiles slightly. "It won't be long before he becomes the mafia's most powerful ability user. However, someone needs to teach him how to keep his blade."

I am startled. I have never heard Dazai praise his subordinates so unreservedly.

"Is he really that outstanding?"

"When I first saw him in the slums, I shuddered. His talent is far above that of others. His ability is extremely destructive, and he is fairly stubborn himself. If left ignored, he would be at the mercy of his ability. It wouldn't be long until he self-destructs."

Dazai has never taken the initiative to take in a subordinate, much less a starving youth in the slums. But Dazai seems to have his own plans.

"Returning to the topic at hand, the threat before us is still Mimic. A five-executive conference has already convened, and it has been decided that we will use all of the mafia's forces and face Mimic. At this point, it's at the stage of martial law."

The five-executive conference is for deciding the mafia's overall direction, a meeting with strong binding powers. This is probably the first meeting ever held since the Dragon Head's Rush. Again, I realise how serious a threat Mimic poses.

"The Black Special Ops Forces' motives are still unclear." Dazai says. "But judging by the way they handled Odasaku, they shouldn't come attacking with fangs bared immediately. The biggest threat is still Mimic. Just now, my subordinates, Akutagawa included, seemed to have been surprise attacked. Mimic is like a beast that eats venomous snakes. Fighting on the main road in front of the art museum—"

As I listen to Dazai speak, I get off the bed. Although numbness still slightly lingers in my fingers, this doesn't affect me in a fight.

"Odasaku, you aren't thinking of going, are you?" Dazai says in a chiding tone.

"We have to face the fight with all of the mafia's forces, right?" I reply, putting on the coat hanging on the wall.

“And here I thought that Odasaku wasn’t interested in fighting.” Dazai says with a smile.

“I am uninterested.” I put on my gun holsters. “But my chest hurts for some reason. For example, owing two people favours.....”

After my preparations, I cross the room. Dazai looks at me silently.

As I walk towards the exit, Dazai throws something over.

As I catch it, the sound of metal jingles and rings.

Opening my palm, it is my car keys.

Dazai opens his mouth, “As for owing people, forget it. The other party doesn’t remember what they’d lent you.”

“I’m not good at forgetting.” I turn back to say. “Dazai, you’ve helped me a few times on this matter. Your subordinates are under attack, right? They need help.”

“If that sort of thing is counted as owing someone a favour, it’ll only make people feel hurt.” Dazai smiles weakly. “Then, who else do you owe a favour?”

I do not reply to that question. I open the door and leave the room.

Dazai doesn’t pursue the matter, sending me off with his gaze.

Without opening our mouths, we both have similar thoughts.

[\[Next\]](#)

Translation notes: Martial law is the most accurate translation but you can read it as “shit is very serious”.

But the smaller shops have been lined at the back. This should be read as them being prioritised to the back... not literally lined along the back, fyi.

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 3, Part 3)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/147288109144/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Thank you to [@nakaharachuyaa](#) @mlntyoonqi @bananasaurr... Please go thank them I don't know what else to tell you really. Warnings for violence. Shit is going downhill this early in.

[\[Previous\]](#)

Before the white chalk shrine, two forces are engaged in a gunfight.

They are the Mimic soldiers, dressed in grey rags, and the Port Mafia members, in suits and sunglasses. Both parties are shooting with automatic pistols of foreign manufacture. Bullets fly haphazardly across the square, chalk pillars chipped at like ice sculptures, flying in all four directions.

That is the art museum's front courtyard. The building stands stretching towards the clouds, outer walls made of alabaster. Square blocks of stone that one associates with dimensional space covers the entire front courtyard. Numerous white round pillars serve as covers in this gunfight, smashed up one after the other.

The mafia has four people and Mimic has nine; in terms of quality, numbers, and experience, Mimic has an overwhelming advantage. The mafia is in trouble.

Because Mimic's squad leader employs a crossfire attack, they have split up into smaller teams. One of the mafia's higher members instructs loudly, returning fire as they back into the art museum's building. On the other hand, Mimic doesn't utter a single word, silently advancing and pursuing the enemy.

The first Mimic soldiers that enter the art museum in pursuit of their enemy notice something off and raise their heads immediately. However, that becomes their last motion.

"Do you not like appreciating art?"

The soldier's heads fly to the side.

The heads hit the wall and rebound, rolling back towards their feet. Not long after, the sharply sliced necks spurt fresh blood.

A black shadow flies to the ground from above. A black coat flutters in the wind, sophisticatedly swelling open.

The Mimic soldiers following behind notice something off and raise their guns.

"How vulgar. This is a place that showcases artworks of the human spirit, one must be respectful."

The shadow turns around, black coat slowly twisting.

The black coat splits into three, morphing into crude sharp blades, flying level to the ground.

Firstly, the rifles are sliced in two, revealing a smoothly cut surface. The cut components fall out from within the gun.

Next are the fingers holding the gun. A few fingers fall without a word, dropping to the ground with a pitter patter sound.

Lastly, the gun-wielding Mimic soldiers' chests shift, the upper body facing forward, lower body facing backwards as they crumple to the ground.

The remaining soldiers lucky enough to have escaped the black blade's range of slaughter point their muzzles towards the black coat, pulling the trigger.

"Guns are the weapons of fools."

The black coat's shadow – Akutagawa – takes another step forward.

The automatic pistol fires twelve bullets in a second, clashing with the silent black blade that has been solidified by darkness.

Before they could come into contact with Akutagawa, the bullets have all been sliced apart. The remaining bullets hit a transparent wall right in front of Akutagawa and stop short. Akutagawa is splitting the space as a defence.

Akutagawa turns his body, black killing blade trailing after his movements spiritedly.

For some it is their face, for some it is their body, for some, it is their two legs being sliced apart. Regardless, the black blade dances wildly without rest. As though an independent entity, the blade morphs into a brutal black storm, slicing apart everything in its attacking range. It is an ability specialising in destruction and killing, built only for murder.

Akutagawa smiles.

To strike a comparison, it would be akin to a pitch black demon swallowing grey ghosts.

"Retreat!"

The expressions of the remaining Mimic soldiers change as they maintain their distance, retreating backwards.

"Don't retreat! Fight me!"

Akutagawa shouts towards the soldiers, chasing after them.

Bullets and black guns dance wildly on the battlefield.

"This isn't enough, this sort of level can't be considered suffering! Face me with greater brutal violence that could freeze over one's soul!"

The youth in the black coat shouts. His tone carries some kind of pleading quality.

At this moment, Mimic's cargo truck appears before the art museum. A new batch of Mimic soldiers get off the car and spread out. Akutagawa reveals a grin like that of a wild dog. At this very moment—

A flare is fired from near the cargo truck.

The phosphorous light rockets straight up with a red tail trailing, casting a shadow over everything on the ground.

Mimic ceases fire.

"What—?"

Akutagawa surveys the battlefield with a look of uncertainty. Not a single enemy raises their gun. One by one, they place their guns on the ground, some even raising both hands.

"Surrender—?" Akutagawa mutters in disbelief towards the scene before his eyes. "How can it be!"

Among Mimic's members, a man walks forward with both hands raised.

It is a soldier with an good set of features. His clothes and hair look like their souls have been sucked away, leaving a bluish silver appearance. His build is similar to that of other Mimic soldiers, although he is much taller than the other soldiers. That being said, it is as if he doesn't have any weight and is silent when he walks. The chest of his uniform is decorated with combat medals of varying colours. Emotionless eyes are fixated on Akutagawa.

At a loss for what to do, the mafia members point the muzzles of their gun towards the unarmed man approaching them.

"Is it you... The ability user who guns have no effect on?"

The tall man barely moves his mouth to speak. His voice is like the crooning wind, sounding like it is coming from all directions.

"Who are you?"

"Commander. ...Mimic's leader."

[\[Next\]](#)

Translation notes. *"His build is similar to that of other Mimic soldiers, although he is much taller than the other soldiers."* The original translation isn't about his height, but rather his stature being higher than other soldiers, but for the sake of English we dumbbed it down to physicality.

I also searched high and low *I know* white chalk shrine sounds ridiculous but that's all I could find.

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 3, Part 4)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/147317142237/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Say thanks to your proofreaders @nakaharachuyaa @mlntyoonqi @bananasaurr I put them through so much shit tbh

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The moment he says these words, the mafia's combat squad runs forward at once, pointing their guns at the enemy.

Mimic's commander's gaze does not waver.

"The commander is surrendering first? That's a brave move, but I cannot believe it. —No, I'm not satisfied!"

Akutagawa's coat morphs into a black sash and flies out, wrapping around Mimic's commander's arms and legs tightly, causing the commander's knees to hit the ground.

"Report your name, leader of Mimic."

"My name is Andre Gide. I have come... to fight you." The commander speaks calmly without so much as wavering.

"Mimic's commander wants to fight me personally? If that is true, that would be the greatest honour, but I don't believe you. Moreover, without being prompted, you're saying what countless others have said before." Akutagawa says while gazing coldly at the other. "Mimic's leader, do you know why I haven't cut your head off?"

"That... Because that was what you were taught?"

Akutagawa punches Gide's face. With his arms and legs bound, Gide cannot dodge. Droplets of blood spurt out from the corner of his mouth.

"I didn't cut your head off because I heard Mimic's leader is an ability user." Akutagawa snatches the old pistol on Gide's waist, aiming at Gide. "No matter how many pieces of trash that only know how to scatter bullets I kill, *that person* will not acknowledge me. Show your ability! If you really do have an ability, I will grant you your wish and fight you."

Gide gazes at Akutagawa and the gun, before he speaks in a low voice.

"So this is your ability... manipulating that black coat." Gide says, looking at the black cloth tied around his arms and legs. "It is an outstanding ability with limitless possibilities. But... it's not enough. It's not enough to release our souls from our sins... I might have placed my expectations of you too high."

The skin on Akutagawa's face hardens like diamonds. His breathing stops. The sound of muscles tightening can be heard from somewhere within his body.

Akutagawa's answer is a flash of a black blade.

With both arms and legs tied up, the killing strike is unavoidable. Without a shred of nervousness, Gide's body falls forward, turning his head out of the way.

The black blade dangerously slices past the side of Gide's head. A few strands of hair are cut off, fluttering in the air. The front of Gide's head sweeps past the old pistol Akutagawa had snatched. The pistol slips out of Akutagawa's hand, causing his finger to pull on the trigger, firing a shot.

The black band tied around Gide reacts, wrapping around the bullet to block it before it hits Akutagawa. But because of this, Gide's left hand regains its freedom.

There is still one more pistol under Gide's uniform. With his left hand, he pulls out that pistol, shooting at a mafia member unable to react due to the sudden change in the situation. The bullet hits their shoulder. Because of the shock, shots are fired from the mafia member's automatic rifle.

The mafia member fires three shots. One shot pierces through Akutagawa's arm, while the two other shots hit the other mafia members squarely on the chest. A fatal blow.

"What—!?"

With the bullet's attack to his arm, Akutagawa reflexively shifts his ability to defending. At this moment, Gide opens fire. The space splitting blocks the incoming bullets, but at the price of loosening of the black bands tying Gide down, freeing Gide.

Gide picks up his fallen pistol. After which, he launches into a one-sided slaughter.

An unimaginable power is at work, but it isn't invisible to the naked eye. The bullets do not veer off, neither is there lightning and fire dancing, nor are there sudden movements. Other than the extremely close proximity, it is no different from the continuous gunfight engaged. Except this time, the result is different.

Gide falls to one side and lets his body spin, opening fire with both hands. As though being sucked in, all the bullets strike the mafia members' vital points. The only one who can successfully defend against it is Akutagawa. That move can hardly be called defending, but rather, *being forced to defend*.

"What's happening? This is— an ability?"

Sparks from the muzzle light up Gide's surroundings. The rifles' counterattack and Akutagawa's black blade are all dodged by Gide. Moreover, it is by the slightest of movements, like dodging small bugs.

One of Gide's bullets finally cut through Akutagawa's defence, hitting his abdomen. Akutagawa leans backwards because of the attack.

Akutagawa coughs blood as he retreats. The black cloth wraps around the wounds on his arm and abdomen, forming a temporary bandage to stop the bleeding. Because of this, the amount of cloth used for attacking and defending has been reduced, and the situation is growing disadvantageous for Akutagawa.

"How can it be— There's actually an ability that's even more destructive than mine!"

"You don't need to feel envious, ability user of the mafia... I should be saying that." Gide rises, wielding guns in both hands. "If you had more power... If you accumulated ample experience, the situation might have been different. But now, you are just a little black duckling."

"Are you mocking me—!" Akutagawa's hair stands on end. The black cloth turns, launching a sudden attack as fast as sound.

But the attack doesn't launch. The cloth is shot away before it can even move. Gide had fired the moment he had read the attack.

"You..... can read my movements...!?"

"We are Mimic." Gide aims his gun at Akutagawa. "We are spectres, 'The Spectral Army', the undead army who Heaven does not favour. Before our real enemies salvage our souls, we continue to troop on in filthy blood."

In a flash, Akutagawa's is overwhelmed by Gide's imposing power. He knows Gide's words are not an act or a bluff, only his certain truth.

"...Answer me, Mimic's leader." Even under the pressure of the gun, Akutagawa's tone is calm. "What is your motive for attacking the mafia's territory?"

"There is no motive." Gide replies. "Ghosts do not have any expectations. We can only hope to extinguish the ghosts from ourselves. Previously, we sought this from 'The Order of the Clock Tower', but now, we turn to you.Do you have anything else to say, ability user with the black coat?"

"Kill me." Akutagawa closes his eyes, smiling slightly. "Your feelings... I understand them very well. I'm sorry I cannot become the 'opponent' you seek."

"Goodbye."

Gide curls his finger to shoot.

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[July 13th \(125\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 3, Part 5)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/147367058492/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Please thank your proofreaders @nakaharachuyaa @mlntyoonqi and @bananasaurr. Scan provided by @akutagawapriize (all scans [here](#)).

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He doesn't shoot.

Before he can shoot, Gide makes a motion to dodge, as though a bullet had been fired.

Gun pointing upwards, as though avoiding something, body leaning back.

But even then, *Odasaku's bullet still hits Gide's gun.*

My bullet hits the enemy's gun, causing it to fall to the ground.

The man claiming to be Mimic's commander looks shocked. Perhaps he's shocked that his weapon could be hit so accurately at such a distance. Yet, there is a different kind of shock as well. He made a similar dodging motion before I fired a shot, which comes as a surprise to me.

I cannot keep worrying about all that. As I shoot to keep the enemy in check, I run towards them. Although the enemy fires bullets to counter, I have already "seen" their trajectory.

I turn my head and avoid the bullet aimed at my head. The bullets I fire in return are dodged with the same movements.

They were dodged?

"The mafia's reinforcements...!"

I get closer to the opponent without being able to land a hit until I'm at a distance close enough to snatch away the opponent's gun. In reality, I was already planning to snatch it away. But Mimic's commander easily twists his arm to avoid my hand. It is the same strange reaction from before. My movements had already been read by him.

I swiftly give up my plan to remove the enemy's weapon and search for mafia members who are still breathing. The majority have already ceased breathing. Only the youth in the black coat is still conscious. I remember he is a teenager called Akutagawa.

"We're escaping."

"What are you doing!"

I scoop up the resisting Akutagawa, running towards the back road. Akutagawa is very light, like a withered branch. If his body continues to bleed, it won't be long until he becomes a mummy.

At that moment, we are welcomed by the gunfire of automatic rifles. They're Mimic soldiers.

Having already predicted the attack, I carry Akutagawa as I jump to one side to avoid the line of fire. The pain from an opening wound elicits a groan from Akutagawa, but I have no time to comfort him. As I run, I fire shots to intimidate the opponent. While the Mimic soldiers' guards are up, I run into the plantation on the side.

I run across the plantation while instructions to pursue are shouted from behind. Inside the plantation, there are a few sparse larches growing. The enemy's line of fire will not reach in here easily. But this doesn't guarantee that the road ahead isn't a dead end.

"Sorry, I'm going to put you down. Can you run on your own?"

I place Akutagawa on the ground. The wound on his abdomen starts bleeding again. Akutagawa kneels on the grassy dirt beneath a tree.

"I'm Oda Sakunosuke, Dazai's friend, and I'm here to get you out of Hell's cauldron."

I extend a hand out towards Akutagawa. Akutagawa continues to apply pressure on his abdominal wound, unmoving. His ability is fairly powerful in offense and defence, but his physical body seems very weak.

I suddenly see an image.

I react to the image, forcibly bending my body backwards.

Where my head was the moment before, the black blade has already sliced through it like lightning.

"I've heard of your name before, you're just a junior member."

Akutagawa speaks in gasps. His gaze is full of rage, like he can't wait to eat me alive.

"That's correct."

"You said you are Dazai-san's... that person's friend?" His burning eyes pierce through me. Something is scorching Akutagawa's heart black.

"That's correct." I reply.

"Dazai-san once said that I wouldn't win against you even in a hundred years." Akutagawa's explosive murderous intent grows. "That person probably wouldn't lie. Because of that, I won't let you off. To say that I cannot compare to a junior member? —Why? Why? Why?"

Three strips of black cloth fly towards me. Having seen the attack, I roll to one side to dodge. Behind me, the tree that was cut down by the black blade falls to the ground with a splitting sound.

"They'll reach us while we're having an internal conflict."

"Why!? Why won't Dazai-san look at me.....!!"

I keep my body low enough for my face to practically touch the ground. After cutting down the tree, the black cloth returns and slices across the top of my head from behind. Trees fall again.

What a terrifying ability. Its range and speed are impeccable. Most importantly, the blade that can split anything it touches in two has the destructive power to snatch first or second place in the mafia. To be able to perform at this level at such an age is a talent that could send chills down one's spine. No wonder Dazai would want to keep him by his side to groom him.

However, there's no time to be amazed now.

I fire towards Akutagawa. The black cloth remaining by his hand charges forth and rips through the space, causing the bullet to fall into the split and stop short.

Having long known this defensive measure, I use this opportunity to go around Akutagawa's side, mercilessly

kicking Akutagawa's wounded arm.

"Kuh...!"

Akutagawa twists his body in pain, losing consciousness. Having repeatedly used his ability, not to mention the space splitting defence he has yet to get used to, his energy is near depleted. Akutagawa faints immediately from the pain of being kicked in his gunshot wound.

He was already at his limit.

I have heard that Dazai's spartan methods of teaching are quite harsh. Even if the result of it will allow his power to increase quickly, Akutagawa is still a young boy. His energy has been exhausted from fighting Mimic's soldiers, their gifted commander, and me consecutively. It wouldn't be surprising if he'd fainted at any moment. Where does his stubbornness come from?



“Why won’t Dazai-san look at me.....!!”

Akutagawa let out a desperate shout. From his expression, feelings other than anger can be seen vaguely.

“I had a feeling... that I would meet that ability user in this country.”

“Who are you referring to?” I turn my head.

Someone is standing at the entrance of the plantation. It is Mimic’s commander and three other soldiers.

Gunshots cannot be heard anywhere. Because of this, the surrounding forestation is rendered even quieter.

"I am Andre Gide. I am searching for... the person who can free us ghostly beings," the commander says. He has a good set of features. If he were to wear an expensive suit, glass of wine in hand, he could very well be a movie actor on the silver screen. The tone of his voice sounds as though it has come from some ten years ago.

"Really? I can introduce you to a funeral business, you can get a discounted price."

"There's no need... Because I've found it now."

Gide fires his gun at the same time he finishes speaking. That was an accurate attack aimed between my brows. But no matter where it comes from, since I can predict it five seconds before, dodging is an effortless task.

I take half a step to the right.

Bullets hit me squarely between the brows and in my heart. A jacketed hollow point bullet used for killing people shatters my skull, piercing through the backside of my brain. The attack sends my head flying back.

[\[Next\]](#)

Translation notes:

Hell's cauldron is a reference to one of the eighteen levels of hell where people are literally boiled alive in a cauldron of hot oil. The eighteen levels of hell are pretty gruesome, not gonna lie.

No wonder Dazai would want to keep him by his side to groom him. I use the word 'groom' but I feel like everyone should know that the word in Chinese is the same as cultivate as in cultivating crops and the mental image won't leave me.

Since there isn't really a way to convey italics with Chinese characters, they're actually done in bold. But Akutagawa's words are in a *completely different font* as well, so make what you will of it. Also, Akutagawa's thirst for Dazai is probably comparable to real life Dazai's thirst for Akutagawa, just look at [these scribbles Dazai Osamu did during high school](#) I found (if you can't read it, he's literally scribbled 'Akutagawa Ryunosuke' over and over again what a nerd).

[July 14th \(146\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 3, Part 6)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/147391931832/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

This part is a fair bit longer than the last couple of parts. Think of it as making it up to you for the previous part. Much thanks to @nakaharachuyaa @mlntyoonqi and @bananasaurr for looking this over!

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The image ends.

That was a prediction made with my ability. I suppress the conflict in my heart and dodge towards the left, the opposite of the earlier image. But at the same time I dodge, the bullet pierces the skull. The depths of my brain shake from the impact, a soft wet sound ringing through both of my ears.

The image ends.

I stand in a daze.

Gide has his gun raised, maintaining the same position from the start. *He never fired his gun.*

I feel confused, like I've been suddenly dragged into deep water.

What just happened?

"Your confusion is also my confusion." Gide says, putting down the gun. "Because you can do the exact same thing that I can do. You have the ability to 'see the danger that would occur to you a few seconds later'. Just now, I saw the future of you heading to the right to dodge, so I adjusted my aim accordingly. But you "saw" this future, so you adjusted and dodged to the other side. I saw this as well... Do you understand what I'm saying?"

The same ability—?

"Your ability to see the future is all powerful, so no one will be able to see to your death... Other than me." Gide tightens muscles on both sides of his face, pulling his lips to either side slightly, as though smiling. "And the person who can see to mine is the same; other than you, there is no one else. You are the only person who can stop this war."

Gide's smile is genuine. It feels like putting a very small dose of poison into one's consciousness.

I reflexively point my gun at Gide.

"Very good, just like that." Gide says, pleading. "Only that bullet can stop this war. You are a mafia member. Since that's the case, killing the top brain of your enemy is just what you'd wish for."

My muzzle is aimed at Gide. Gide's words are right. When two ability users who can see the future engage in battle, it is impossible to tell who will win. But other than me, no other mafia member would be able to make him break a sweat.

I inhale and exhale, the muzzle still steadily pointed at the enemy.

Then I put down my gun.

"I refuse." I say. "I'm only here to save my comrade. And frankly speaking, I haven't killed people for a few years

now.”

“.....What?” Gide’s voice trembles for the first time. “You... Aren’t you a mafia member?”

“The mafia has all sorts of members.”

“Guns are tools for killing, and this is a battlefield.” Gide’s voice slowly starts to turn coarse. “So, we must fight! Chip away and weaken our souls, fight with all our strength! In a battle, just one bullet is more than enough. Even if you don’t shoot, if I do, you don’t have a choice but to attack!”

Gide raises his gun and points it at me. I have already “seen” how accurate his aim is.

“Everyone is interested in fighting, very interested.” I say. “But I don’t have that interest. My interest lies in living. To me, what’s important is how you want to live on or what forces you to fight. If those reasons die, they will be lost forever.”

“In this world, there isn’t a life more important than death!”

Gide pulls the trigger.

I see an image.

If I lean back to dodge, I get hit by the bullet. If I duck down to dodge, I’ll get hit by the bullet. If I move my body to one side, I’ll get hit by the bullet. These events play out in my mind in their entirety.

At this point, my prediction ability cannot be used as a reference.

To reduce the surface area the bullet can hit, I leap forward to the ground. The enemy’s bullet thinly grazes the skin near my temple and flies towards the back.

The Mimic soldiers beneath Gide move in tandem with their commander, firing their automatic rifles at the same time.

This is easily predicted. I roll in the dirt, avoiding the rain of bullets. As I roll, I raise both guns and return fire. These are carefully aimed shots of intimidation that will not hit anyone.

I roll beside Akutagawa, bending my knees and raising my guns.

“Missing... on purpose?” Gide’s face darkens. “This sort of thing... Do you think this is the fight we’ve been awaiting? What has it been for! What have my subordinates and I travelled this road of battles for until now...”

“Very sorry for making you specially come all the way to Japan, but I have a reason not to kill people. You guys should go find someone else.”

“Why!” Gide shouts. “Ever since that battle, my subordinates and I have roamed the earth like ghosts, searching for a place worth dying in! You are our only hope! Shoot! Shoot me! Otherwise...”

Gide’s cries rise to the sky, floating hollowly. The sound is like that of a man in his grave, yet, also like that of someone desperately trying to live on.

I can only reply to that question.

In a calm voice, I say to Gide:

“I cannot fulfill your wish, because I have a dream. One day, when I leave the mafia, when I can do whatever I want, I want to find a room with an ocean view, sit at the table...”

—*Then you write it.*

—*That is the only way to allow that novel to retain its completeness.*

“I want to become a novelist.” I say. “To toss aside arms, to pick up pen and paper... Someone once told me, ‘Writing novels is about writing people.’... To take someone’s life is to be unable to write people’s lives, so I won’t kill people ever again.”

In that moment, all the sound disappears from the scenery.

Even the sound of wind and leaves rubbing together cannot be heard. The world is filled with a lonely silence.

I have never told anyone about this — not even Dazai or Ango.

“That’s your answer?” Gide says quietly. “That’s your reason for refusing to enter our battlefield?”

“That’s correct.” I reply.

I look at Gide, and Gide looks at me.

Silently meeting each other’s eyes, our gazes are trying to understand the other’s feelings that lie beneath.

I sense that the negotiation has failed.

Gide raises his gun and shoots towards the fainted Akutagawa.

I am unable to pull Akutagawa away to avoid the bullet. So I jump in front of him.

The attack hits the dead center of my chest. Jumping to the side, I spin half a turn from the attack and fall to the ground, rolling backwards.

“Living? We are already dead. We are nothing but soulless bodies puppeteered by ghosts. An ability user such as yourself is but an empty shell waiting for these bodies to be burnt up by the flames of war.”

I cough non-stop. Every time I cough, a sharp pain shoots through my chest.

I tear away the clothes on my chest, checking for the bullet. The bullet has been blocked by my bulletproof vest. Even so, it feels like I’ve received a pounding by an iron hammer, causing my ribs to let out a cry of pain.

“You’re not dead.” I speak in broken gasps. “I don’t know what has happened in the past, but you can slowly think about how you want to die.”

“Why don’t you understand.... You’re the only one.....!”

Squeezing these words out, the emotions in Gide’s eyes suddenly disappear like a flame being extinguished. His grey pupils too are as empty as endless ruins.

“Since you don’t have such intent, there’s no helping it. You won’t kill me because you don’t understand my wish. I won’t kill you, because only you can lead us towards the battlefield of cleansing fire.”

The truck that carried soldiers earlier is silently parked at the plantation entrance behind Gide.

One by one, Gide and the soldiers beneath him silently get onto the truck with a sadness and pain like that of a funeral.

As they leave, Gide turns his head to look at me, and says:

“I will make you understand.”

His face is pale white, while his voice carries a chilling sadness that doesn't belong to this world.

“I will make you understand. Here—” Gide points towards his temple with force. “I will make you see what's in here. When that happens, you will understand the truth. Between you and me, *one of us must die*.”

Gide walks away without a sound, gets onto the truck, and disappears. The last look he gives me is one that could freeze one's blood over. He spits out the words:

“Look forward to it.”

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[July 14th \(95\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 3, Part 7)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/147443082840/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Knock knock who's there it's me telling you to thank your proofreaders @nakaharachuyaa @mlntyoonqi and @bananasaurr they deserve it!! The last instalment for the third chapter will be up in around 24 hours!

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That day, Mimic doesn't carry out another attack.

After having my injuries treated, I chat with Dazai for a while.

After this, I lock myself in my room to think. In the darkness of the room, I listen to the sound of my heartbeat, focusing on the bubble-like emotions that continue to surface in my mind.

I have a premonition that something big is about to happen soon. The precursor to an impending major event, like the purple sky before dawn, like the thunder rumbling in the distance before a thunderstorm. This premonition is not because I am an ability user. This is the feeling any normal person would sense before a major turn of events.

But in the end, nothing can be done until the event hits me with a vicious slap. The world is not so forgiving - I can only try and remain strong.

Night falls. I receive a call from Dazai, who expresses he wants to discuss about what happened today and asks if I can come out. I stretch my hand out to pick up my jacket and walk out of the room.

"The night is lovely." Dazai says. "The night belongs to the mafia."

Dazai and I walk along the crowded streets. The residents of the nightlife walk on the streets with a look of calmness. The wet sea breeze blows across old and new buildings all the same. The yellow stars shimmer in the night sky, as though shining their glowing light upon the earth's surface.

"Where are we going next?"

"To meet someone." Dazai smiles slightly. "Speaking of which, you sure are unlucky, Odasaku. Your first meeting with the enemy's big boss and you receive such a passionate courting. Looks like we can hold the wedding this weekend."

"I was not courted." I was not, probably not. "They're nothing but a bunch of weirdos who fight for the sake of fighting."

"Really? Isn't this cute? To put effort into thinking of the way one will die; I've never thought about that." Dazai says with a cheerful tone. "But we cannot underestimate the warning they've left Odasaku. We can't say for certain that they won't return after changing their battle strategy. I'll assign my subordinates to guard Odasaku's surroundings."

"For how long will this war continue?"

"Mimic's soldiers are another matter, their commander's ability is troublesome, so surprise attacks have no effect. We need more inside information. Are you nervous?"

The mafia has been running around trying to obtain insider information on Mimic, but at this stage, it has all been in vain.

"There's only Ango." I say. "Ango has lived as a double agent for the mafia and Mimic for a few years. He should know even more than what he told me last time."

"I'm of the same opinion." Dazai nods.

"Is there any way to find Ango?"

"*There is.*" Dazai says abruptly.

"There is." I nod. Then I feel shocked. "There is?"

"Technically, there isn't a need to find him. He's waiting for us. Alright, we're here."

I raise my head towards the direction Dazai's finger is pointing towards.

"Here?" I say.

"Is there any other place?" Dazai smiles bitterly.

There, where the small lights are lit along the dark street, is the white signboard of the bar we frequented.

Dazai and I walk down the dimly lit stairs leading to the basement floor. I can faintly hear the sounds of conversation. Cigarette smoke swirls at our feet like a white wave. With every step, a tuneful "ka-chik" sound rings out.

Thinking back, there was always someone here. Even though we never agreed to meet up or decide to go there beforehand, there would always inexplicably be a friend there to greet me when I entered the door.

This time is no different.

"Ahh, hello. I came first."

Sitting at his usual spot, in his usual tone, Ango raises his glass at us in greeting.

Signalling to the boss with my eyes, I raise one finger. The boss nods to me with his gaze.

Dazai and I take a seat beside Ango.

I say, "At least drop us a line."

"Getting rid of my tailers is hard enough." Ango smiles bitterly. "I have a lot of troublesome matters that I can't speak about freely. But since there is no one following me today, and there are no wiretapping devices, I can drink freely. Now then, how did you two know that I would be here?"

"You dropped a handkerchief during the explosion at the ruins." Dazai smiles slightly. "A napkin from this store was wedged inside. It's too obvious! Information agents will use unexpectedly dated methods sometimes."

That means before I passed out, I had lent that handkerchief to Ango. Was it wedged in then? I thought I had lost it.

"The only people who can communicate through such methods are us." Ango says, sighing lightly. "I thought that there would be no way I could come back here to drink again. I'm very fortunate, so I thought to share this fortune with my two friends."

"For an *undercover officer*, aren't you being too sentimental?" Dazai says directly.

I look at Ango. While Ango does not react immediately to Dazai's words, a faint smile appears on his face.

“...Only you.” Ango spits out these words after a long while.

“Ango, you had another identity before you joined the mafia. That identity is an *agent of the country’s secret organisation, The Ministry of Internal Affairs’ Special Ability Department*. Your job was to monitor the mafia’s movements and report them.”

“.....That’s right.” Ango says after a long sigh.

“Although it is a secret organisation that regulates ability users in the country, if they were to enter an all-out war with the Port Mafia, they wouldn’t be able to escape unscathed. Moreover, the Special Ability Department’s job is to manage ability users, not terminate them. That is why they sent an agent to infiltrate the mafia and keep an eye on our movements. This was a surefire plan, am I right?”

Does that mean to say that the commotion Ango caused to join the mafia was arranged by the Special Ability Department?

“Now, Mimic has appeared. The gifted criminal organisation’s plan to enter Japan is a troublesome matter for the Special Ability Department. Hence, the Special Ability Department has ordered Ango to investigate Mimic’s movements as a double agent from the mafia. Of course, as a precaution, the ‘Black Special Ops Forces’ - the Special Ability Department’s implementation force will enter to provide help.”

“For a government official with such a low pay, the job isn’t worth it.” A smile starts to replace Ango’s gloomy expression.

“That is to say, Ango isn’t a double agent, but a *triple agent*?” I say.

“That’s right.” Dazai nods. “Now, this is all the truth I’ve managed to find out. Boring topics of conversation are over, let’s have a drink!”

Drinks are quietly served to our seats.

If it were the usual, we would raise our glasses. But we didn’t this time, and there probably will not be a next time.

[\[Next\]](#)

Translation notes: We came to the conclusion that there wasn’t an accurate translation for “不愧是你/bu kui shi ni” so we settled for “only you”. As your proofreader explains it, Ango is basically grudgingly acknowledging that Dazai *would* be the one to work out what the napkin meant.

It might not be clear but the boss = bartender, big boss = Gide. We were afraid people might misinterpret it, but the Chinese word “老板/lao ban” tends to refer to bosses of businesses and restaurants, etc. “老大/lao da”, which I translated as “big boss”, is usually used in like a “big brother” kind of meaning for gangs or groups.

Also, the word “笑/xiao” can mean both smiling and laughing, they’re pretty interchangeable. You can keep that in mind while reading. I went with smiling for most instances.

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 3, End)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/147491020472/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

It's come to my attention that we have been grossly spelling the title wrong after all this time. It's actually called *Pain and Suffering*. Enjoy the ride.

Please consider purchasing the book! You can find it on the [official site](#) or [Kinokuniya](#) ([Chinese version](#) too!) for US (and Kino also has stores in other parts of the world, use the ISBN number).

If I haven't said this enough, thank you to the best proofreaders I could ask for @nakaharachuyaa @mIntyoonqi @bananasaurr! Go thank them they work so damn hard I don't think any of them signed up for the job expecting this **pain**.

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Even after a long while, no one opens their mouth to speak. A heavy silence far more bitter than any item on the menu falls between us.

"Then," Ango is forced to open his mouth because no one else will. "Have you come to confirm that the friendship between us is unchanged?"

"How could that be!" The corners of Dazai's mouth carry a smile. "We're here to obtain information on Mimic. You should have known that by now, right?"

"Unbelievable. Even though it's the same alcohol as before, there isn't a taste to it." Ango stares at the glass, muttering to himself, before he asks me, "The Special Ability Department's monitoring team sent over a report about Gide and Odasaku-san's exchange. You've already seen Gide's ability, haven't you?"

I reply that I have seen it. It is the ability to predict the enemy's attack.

"The Special Ability Department cannot do anything about such an ability." Ango shakes his head. "The only way is to drop a massive bomb onto his head... But Gide appears and disappears like a ghost, no one can tell where he'll be. The higher ups are planning to leave the entire matter to the mafia to handle. As long as they let these two organisations fight one another, then handle the surviving side, the Special Ability Department will not have to sacrifice anyone."

To the Special Ability Department that agonises over gifted criminal organisations, such a move would be like killing two birds with one stone.

"Such a method would be fairly selfish." Dazai tilts his head. "Even for the mafia, to break through such an ability would be difficult."

Following this, Dazai turns his eyes to look at me.

"...Of course, other than a certain junior member."

"He is a soldier who has weathered hundreds of battles, a commander who has led several strong soldiers." I say, looking at my reflection cast in the glass' fluid. "Moreover, regardless of whether it's my ability or his ability, the result is just the ability to 'predict a few seconds into the future'. In the end, who will topple the other will depend on fighting and shooting technique."

Shooting technique - that is to say, the person who can accurately attack the other from a further distance will be the

winner.

“Odasaku’s shooting ability...” Dazai smiles in indication.

“The majority are uncertain elements. ‘The Oddity of Abilities’ is another problem.”

“The oddity of abilities?”

“When you were using your ability against Gide, was there something out of the ordinary?”

I think for a while and reply, “There was.”

That time, I saw many complicated overlapping predictions of the future.

“The government has only started to analyse such a phenomenon recently.” Ango says with a look of seriousness. “They have already confirmed that similar abilities counteracting one another will result in the loss of control over the ability and will cause it to develop in a hard to see, unpredictable direction. The details are not clear, but... for example, if two ability users with the ability to “launch an attack first” faced off, how would the situation unfold? If an ability user who “will lie to the other party” and an ability user who “will definitely see the truth” talk to each other, what would be the end result? The answer is “we won’t know if we don’t try”. In most cases, one of the abilities will win out. However, it’s been said that rarely, a scenario where neither party emerges victorious can develop. The Special Ability Department terms this as an “oddity”.”

Then, at that time, what I saw was an oddity? Or is an oddity something that happens after?

“Actually, I’m not supposed to reveal these matters.” Ango says. “If the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ higher ups find out about our meeting, it’ll be a big problem. For the time being, I have to disappear.”

Upon hearing this, Dazai looks at Ango, smiling as he says:

“Aiya, judging by your tone, you must still think that you’ll be able to leave this place alive, Ango.”

The air freezes over.

The expression on Ango’s face quietly subsides.

Dazai is still smiling.

“Isn’t that a given? A secret agency surrounded in mystery. Appearing and disappearing, an existence spoken of in rumours that makes gifted criminal organisations in the country tremble. One of its members is right before my eyes. I think the information and namelists I want you to spit out are even thicker than a dictionary, am I wrong?”

I cannot help but ask Dazai, “Are you planning to turn this place into a battlefield?”

Ango doesn’t move, his vaguely smiling expression frozen. His gaze aimed at Dazai looks like it’s been nailed down.

“It’s my fault.” Ango says hopelessly. “I was mistaken. I selfishly believed that everyone could look past their positions and meet in this place. To avoid troubling the shop, I won’t retaliate, do as you wish.”

Ango should know how ruthless the mafia’s interrogation is. He mustn’t be planning to return to the Special Ability Department alive.

If I help Ango now, how will the situation change? It won’t. We cannot break out of Dazai’s carefully laid web. And in the event I betray the mafia, the orphans in the Western restaurant will lose their lives.

“Ango.” Dazai gazes at his hands, inspecting the palms and the backs, spitting out these words. “On my command,

my subordinates will surround this area. But they haven't surrounded the area yet. Before I change my mind, get out of my sight."

Ango looks like he wants to say something, but he swallows his words anyway.

"I'm not upset. I knew this would happen from the very beginning." Dazai says, expressionless. "Regardless of whether or not Ango is from the Special Ability Department, things that we don't want to lose will definitely be lost. Now that it has come to this, I have no more feelings anymore. Things worth pursuing will always disappear the moment before you get them. Nothing is worth prolonging a painful life to pursue."

I look at Dazai intently. Although we have known each other for very long, this is the first time Dazai has spoken about himself. One can see something as sharp as a giant fishhook piercing and gnawing into Dazai's life.

"Dazai, Odasaku-san, I am the same as everyone. As a member of an underground organisation that I cannot disclose, as an ability user who arrests ability users, I have always buried myself in the dark corner of the government. I am a person who can never live a life walking the path of light." Ango says, looking at us. "Someday, when the time changes, when the Special Ability Department and the mafia's structures change, when we are in positions of greater freedom - can we come back here to drink?"

"Just stop, Ango." A voice calls out from nearby. That voice is my voice. "Forget it."

Ango shakes his head, hurt. Following which, he slowly rises from the barchair, as though listening to the sound of his own footsteps, walking out of the shop with his head lowered.

I probably won't meet Ango again.

Where Ango was sitting, there is something else other than his finished glass.

I pick it up and show it to Dazai.

That is the photo we took in this shop just a few days ago.

In the photo, we are all smiling so happily.

End of Chapter 3

[\[Next Chapter\]](#)

Translation notes: I decided to use the word *oddity* to describe the phenomenon of two similar abilities interacting, but the same Chinese character can mean *strange*, *miraculous*, among other things. Chinese is pretty fluid, but I hope it gets the point across.

Dazai actually tells Ango to 消失, literally translated, to *disappear*. I took a more vulgar interpretation. It seemed suitable, considering the way Dazai greets him in chapter 26.

I took a lot of liberties with Odasaku's words to Ango at the end. The literal translation is more like "Don't continue talking, Ango.", "Don't talk about it.". I took it upon myself to tweak it around a little to make more sense in conversation.

Again, I'll be taking a couple of days off and getting right into chapter 4 soon after. Please look forward to it, I will hopefully have something up by the middle of next week.

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, Part 1)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/147740880467/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Apologies for the delay on this. The week's been really busy for me, so updates on these might be slower than I'd expected, but I wanted to get this chapter rolling first. Chapter 4 is slightly longer than the rest, so I'll be estimating around 11 or 12 parts for this chapter.

Let me just take this moment to warn you for violence and general pain and suffering for the entire chapter, just in case you weren't already aware what you were getting into. Without further ado.

Please thank @nakaharachuyaa @mlntyoonqi @bananasaurr!! Best proofreaders I could ask for.

The feelings of man will reflect the weather, but the weather ignores the feelings of man. That day, sunshine beats down on Yokohama. It is a warm day.

I walk along the streets of Yokohama with a gloomy expression. Because my two hands are full of things, my expression must definitely look gloomier than usual. It's not because I'm in a bad mood, but simply a problem of balance. At the moment, my hands are filled with snacks and toys. It requires some practice to be able to carry goods with a gleeful expression.

These items are consolation gifts, tributes for the kids who are undoubtedly feeling gloomy living a life of refuge. The kids must definitely feel bored at the shelter Dazai had prepared. I feel uneasy wondering if this level of bribery will be able to make them pick up their smiles again. To kids, what adults deem as ample is never enough.

A young man riding a bicycle whistles into the distance. Children are chasing after something important that only they can see, running ahead of their mother. The war between criminal organisations and whatnot feels like it is happening in some other part of the earth.

I think about Mimic as I walk, those lonely soldiers who live to die.

Gide said: "I will make you understand me." Those words are a curse that will draw me into the fight, but at the same time, they are the painful cries of a child. The only people that can understand him are his subordinates or his enemies, and he hopes that I will become the latter.

I do not know if killing one another is the right thing. If this goes on any further, the war will continue without an end until either the mafia or Mimic is exterminated. Is some form of peace impossible? Is understanding them and drawing a boundary line at a suitable place something that cannot be achieved?

There is also the matter of the children. When the kids are independent and do not require support, I plan to leave the mafia. I do not know when I will have to wait until, but one day, that day – when the kids grow up and become office workers, engineers, or sports players – should come. I heard that the oldest kid's dream is to become a mafioso like me. This matter gives me a headache, but there should be a way to convince him otherwise. When that time comes, I can finally toss aside my guns, sit before a table by a window with an ocean view and start to write novels.

I pause before arriving at the office. The place Dazai has prepared for the kids is a customs clearance company for imports backed by the mafia. It is situated in a two storey building by the sea, baptised by the seabreeze, carrying signs of rusting. There is a spacious common carpark beside the building. A greenish-yellow bus is idly parked there.

I heard that Dazai has borrowed the entire place and chased the workers to other offices. He is a man who does things to the extreme. But that is also because Dazai judged that the kids might be attacked.

Carrying the goods, I walk up the office stairs. At the same time, I mentally run a list of which toy to give to which child.

I walk down the corridor, opening the door of the meeting room the kids are supposed to be in.

There isn't a single person in the room.

Tables have been overturned, there is a hole in the wall, and there are marks from something heavy being dragged across the floor. Crayons scattered on the floor have been flattened by large footprints. I hear the sound of something heavy falling to the floor, only to realise it is the sound of the goods I had been carrying in my hands dropping by my feet.

I subconsciously start to run. Dashing out of the meeting room, running downstairs at the risk of tumbling down the stairs and out of the building.

The greenish-yellow bus parked in the carpark starts to drive off.

I look at the back window of the bus.

Through the gaps of the curtains, I can see someone sticking their hand out. The small hand knocks against the glass, and a face can be seen. It is the face of a boy who has been beaten, eyes swollen.

The boy notices me and widens his eyes. It is the oldest boy who said his dream is to become a mafioso. When he notices my gaze, he pulls the curtain open forcefully without hesitation. Behind his back, I can see all the kids. The young boy has pulled the curtain open for me to see this sight.

The Mimic soldiers in the bus notice this, grabbing the boy's shoulder and pulling him back with force. The curtain is roughly drawn shut, and the boy's silhouette disappears.

With enough force for my knees to hit my chin, I sprint towards the bus. Upon noticing me, the bus accelerates, speeding towards the road.

One hand pressing the barrier between the carpark and the street, I cross over in one leap, running beside the bus. The bus gradually picks up speed. My hand reaches under my jacket out of reflex, but I didn't bring my gun today. This is too ridiculous even for a mafioso like me.

I can see where the bus is headed towards. After crossing under the bridge, there is a big turn. Going further up, the road connects to the highway. If they flee up to that point, there will be no hope of catching up again. I have to settle this before then.

Crossing three steps at a time, I run up the stairs of a nearby overhead bridge. Following which, I run to the center of the overhead bridge, and jump towards the adjacent bridge.

The bridge is fitted with a protective iron net. I grab the iron net with one hand to prevent myself from falling. I climb up the iron net and stand on the bridge.

I run about on the bridge. The place beneath my feet is where the roads intersect. The small bus carrying the kids on board is about to pass under my feet right now.

I time my jump.

My jacket billows in the wind with a pattering sound.

I land on the roof of a red minivan driving in front of the bus. My knees and hands contact the roof of the car to cushion the blow. I can hear someone in the vehicle screaming.

Once I turn, I see the bus and its driver. The ones driving the vehicle are Mimic soldiers in grey. The driver glares at me with bloodshot eyes.

The opponents are soldiers. There are at least two of them, and they are carrying guns. I, on the other hand, have no weapon in hand, and no one for support. But since my two eyes have already caught sight of the other's silhouettes, there will always be a way.

The bus picks up speed, pressing closer towards me. The bus driver seems to have decided to crush me and the van. Such a situation would fill a person's heart with fear and make them think of running away. If I hadn't seen the kids' beaten faces earlier, I would have done the same.

I mutter apologies in my heart before forcefully kicking the minivan's rear-view mirror beneath my feet. After a metallic snapping sound rings out, the rear-view mirror helplessly falls. I reach my hand out to tear it off.

At the same time, the bus knocks into the red minivan.

I grab the car body tightly, bracing myself as the rapidly car spins. With the rear view mirror in hand, I fling it towards the Mimic soldier driving the bus.

The large red rear view mirror smashes the windscreen of the bus, hitting the driver's face. The dazed driver who had planned to pull out his gun suddenly steps on the brake.

The bus swerves like a drunken rhinoceros before it finally comes to a stop.

At this time, the minivan I had been using as a foothold comes to a stop. I jump off the roof.

Just when I turn my body to face the stationary bus again, I get an uncomfortable feeling, as though my heart is being pinched.

My brain sounds an alarm with a "Bang! Bang!". My vision turns red, then white, and I run over hurriedly without being conscious of it.

I will make you understand me.

The driver is carrying some sort of transmitter device.

I already understand what this means, but my body cannot catch up. In that moment which felt like forever, the Mimic soldier presses the button of the transmitter device.

Suddenly, the bus explodes.

My entire body hits a wall of air and flies back. While in midair, I lose consciousness. It is only when my back hits someone's car forcefully that I regain consciousness.

I look at the bus.

Columns of flames are pouring out of every window, the vehicle body flying off the ground at an extraordinary height.

It spins half a circle in midair and hits one side of the road.

Not long after, glass shards rain down.

I want to run over. Even if it's one second earlier, I want to run to the bus. But in reality, I fall forward clumsily,

awkwardly twisted on the asphalt.

The bus bursts into flames. It lies horizontally, broken in two from the middle.

I can taste blood in the depths of my throat. There is a violent ringing in my ears rendering me unable to hear anything.

—*All of us are obviously grown-ups!*

My throat hurts and I am unable to breathe. I hear someone's cries in the distance. Because my throat hurts so much, I then realise the person screaming is me.

“UAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!”

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[July 21st \(178\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, Part 2)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/147837979660/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Thank you to [@nakaharachuyaa](#) @mlntyoonqi @bananasaurr for proofreading! Here's a very brief reprieve from most of the pain and suffering.

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A small sightseeing boat floats on Yokohama's waters.

The transparent-like sky scatters sunlight, making the water's surface sparkle. The sightseeing boat is bathed in the reflected sunrays, drifting quietly on the water's surface.

There are only a few people seated on that boat.

A young man with a scholarly face, wearing a pair of round glasses, sits in the middle of the sightseeing boat. It is the Special Ability Department's agent – Sakaguchi Ango.

There is a man seated on Ango's right side.

"Long time no see, Ango, thank you for your invitation today. How does it feel now that you've returned to your original job?"

The man speaks to Ango with a polite smile. He has a head of black hair smoothly combed towards the back and is wearing white. It is the leader of the Port Mafia – Mori Ougai.

"....."

Ango does not reply, nervously lowering his gaze.

"Please don't bully our youngsters, Mr. Mafia Boss."

Across Ango and facing Mori, a white haired, tall man in his prime is seated on the other side. Compared to the other people on the boat, he is the tallest – He is the Ministry of Internal Affairs' topmost commander, Chief Taneda.

Behind Mori and Taneda are direct subordinates from their respective organisations, the mafia bodyguards in black and the Black Special Ops Forces. However, no one has weapons in their hands.

Ango speaks nervously.

"Thank you for coming out here today. Let me repeat once again, this is an unofficial meeting. Recording or photography by persons other than those involved will be regarded as betrayal and the meeting will be suspended immediately."

As Ango speaks, he eyes the shore. On the land growing smaller in the distance, both organisations' subordinates secretly – or rather, openly – wait for orders. In the event there is a betrayal in this meeting and one party attacks the other, the opposing team by the shore will exterminate the surviving party.

This is a meeting held under an extremely dangerous balance, as though holding knives against each other's throats.

"My dear Elise is making a fuss for me to buy ice cream for her when I get back. Are there any good shops

patronised by the government, Chief Taneda?”

“Hahaha, what a good question.” Taneda laughs, fanning his face with the fan in his hands. “I should bring some local delights back for the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ officials waiting for our report too. If I bring your head back, they should be very happy.”

The murderous intents of the two subordinates behind Mori grow.

Yet, Ougai smiles with a cold expression.

“To think, you have to take the effort to curry favour with the bigshots from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Being an official must be very tiring, Chief Taneda.”

“It’s nothing, it’s nothing! Compared to those hiding in the sewers shaking in fear, not knowing when they’ll be exterminated by the government, such a small matter is nothing.”

Ougai and Taneda’s expressions and tones are as though they are chatting and laughing while they play chess under the eaves. But Ango, acting as a mediator in the center, is breaking out in cold sweat. If there is really a standoff between the two men before his eyes, in less than three days, Yokohama will become a city of death, bodies littered everywhere.

“Without further ado, let’s get onto the main topic.” Even though Ango is one of the Special Ability Department’s elites, interrupting the two men’s conversation requires caution of the highest degree. “Taneda-san of the Special Ability Department has two requests for the Port Mafia’s Ougai-san. The first is not to interfere or attempt to harm me, Ango. The other is to exterminate the gifted criminal organisation that has illegally immigrated from Europe to Japan – Mimic. Is that okay?”

“Regarding the first point, that is not a problem. Don’t look at me like that, I am very thankful for Ango. You are very outstanding, and have been a great help with my work. Even if that is undercover work. Even now like this, with you as the middleman, realising this meeting with the Special Ability Department. I even want to send a bouquet and give you a hug.”

“Then—”

“But as for the second point, I cannot promise this with certainty. In all, they are a terrifying bunch of people. Because of Mimic, our buttocks are always on fire. If I could, I would want to run away crying.”

Ougai looks at Taneda with an indecipherable smile.

A razor sharp gleam flashes across the depths of Taneda’s eyes. Taneda shuts his eyes, and shifts his gaze towards Ango, signalling to him.

“Now then, the Port Mafia’s request for the Special Ability Department is—”

Chief Taneda lets out a short, heavy sigh.

After which, he draws out a black envelope from his suit.

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BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, Part 3)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/147916012562/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Have I told you that my proofreaders are the best? Because they are!!! Please thank @nakaharachuyaa @mIntyoonqi and @bananasaurr... what will I do without them.

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Meaningless images spin through the insides of my eyes non-stop.

I am standing in a white-walled hotel room with an unpleasant view. Then, I am standing in the plantation in front of the art museum. Then, the second floor of the Western restaurant.

—*Oda Sakunosuke, the Port Mafia wonder with the motto: 'Not to kill anyone no matter what'.*

I am in the back alley, trash strewn all over the floor, the quiet bar in the middle of the night, the elevator of the mafia headquarters, then the window seat of the teahouse while it rains.

—*Writing novels are like writing people.*

—*You have that qualification.*

Was the bearded man speaking the truth? Or was it an offhand consolation? Do I really have the qualifications to write about people?

Even if the bearded man's words were the truth, that is already in the past.

My current self no longer has the qualifications to write about people.

At the site of the explosion, I managed to stand with shaking legs with great difficulty, going into the bus to check. I shouldn't have gone to check, since I can easily imagine the situation inside.

After which, I leave the scene before the commotion gets bigger, dragging my feet and walking towards the Western restaurant.

—*They're soldiers.*

—*Unable to survive in a place off the battlefield, they are the "Grey Spectres" with no master.*

There are no lights turned on in the Western restaurant.

All is silent.

Looking around as I enter, the boss uncle is already dead.

He is standing behind the counter, back against the pots and utensils cabinet, dead. He took three shots to the chest, eyes wide open. He probably picked up the items by his hand immediately. He is gripping the ladle used to cook curry in his hand. Against the gun-wielding Mimic soldiers, how can he fight with a ladle? It is only a Western restaurant under the mafia's banner after all.

I quietly cover Uncle's eyelids. This way, Uncle will finally have the face of a dead person.

I know that my soul is being pulled to the *limit*. It is the sound of my soul undergoing an irreversible change.

An army knife is stuck into the counter of the Western restaurant. The knife has pierced through a map and lodged itself in the counter. I pull the knife out, looking over the map.

The map shows a mountainous area slightly far away from here. An old private plot of land in the valleys is marked with a red "X", the words "The Cemetery of Ghosts" scrawled on.

This is a message from Mimic – from Gide. I fold it nicely and put it in my pocket.

I walk up to the second floor, entering the secret room that Uncle had prepared for me. There, I have hidden a full set of weapons ready in the case of an emergency.

I take off my clothes and put on the thin bulletproof vest. I wear a shirt over it, slipping on my shoulder-hanging gun holsters on either shoulder, doing up the buttons on the back.

I have checked both guns, wiped the dust off them, replacing the oil anew. I have already checked if the front sight is crooked or not.

I unload the bullets and the trigger, familiarising myself with the feeling. After which, I load the bullets into the magazine, and load that into the gun. I pull the sleeve, sending the first bullet into the bore of the gun. I prepare the other gun in the same manner, then place both of them into the gun holsters.

Such fixed actions are like a prayer. In the time I take to repeat my preparations, my heart has long drifted away from my body, roaming about my memories. What kind of person was I before? What did I once chase after? Who did I talk to, what feelings did I have, how did I plan to live on?

My current self knows that everything I have chased after in the past is no different from discarded receipts.

I keep the magazine wristbands and tie them onto my wrists. Put on my bulletproof fiber coat. I stuff grenades into my coat, then stuff as many replacement magazines as possible in as well. Despite my hesitation, I still decide not to bring bandages and analgesic cream. There is no need to.

On the other hand, I find the box of cigarettes I had given up long ago. Taking it and some matches, I walk to the room next door.

That room was once the kids' living quarters. Just a few days ago, I even played and acted out a drama with the kids in this place.

It looks the same as before. Beds with crayon scribbles on the handles, the dirty floorboards, the stained wallpaper. The only difference is the five silhouettes that should be there.

"Goodnight, Kousuke."

I say as I light a cigarette. That is the name of the oldest boy.

"Goodnight, Katsumi. Goodnight, Yuu. Goodnight, Shinji. Goodnight, Sakura."

A stream of faint purple smoke rises from the cigarette silently. I watch it.

"Sleep tight in the quiet place where you all are. I'll take revenge for you all."

I hold the cigarette between my fingers, watching the smoke. The cigarette finishes burning and the smoke disappears.

I walk out.

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I also cheated and got the names of the children from [this comic](#) done by @suzaku-strife (which is slightly exaggerated but a very beautiful comic!! please check it out!)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, Part 4)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148021556788/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Enjoy! By that I also mean *suffer*. Thanks to @nakaharachuyaa @mlntyoonqi @bananasaurr for proofreading!

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“Odasaku!”

As I leave the Western restaurant, a voice I recognise calls me.

“Dazai? What is it?”

“Odasaku, I know what you’re thinking, but I still have to stop you. Even if you do that—”

“Even if I do that, the kids won’t come back?” I say.

Dazai falls silent, as though having exhausted his argument. After which, he says, “Judging from the scale of the war, we already know Mimic’s remaining forces number approximately twenty. They still have strength to spare, and their base should be around the mountainous region in the west. The details are—”

“I already know where they are. Because I received a letter of invitation.”

I hand the map I found earlier to Dazai, the map marked with “The Cemetery of Ghosts”. Dazai looks at it and furrows his brows.

“They’re slowly concentrating their forces at one point. Even if we gather all of the mafia’s forces, we don’t know if we can defeat them.”

“There is no need to gather them.”

“Odasaku, listen to me. A few hours ago, the leader seems to have attended a secret meeting. A meeting with the Special Ability Department, with Ango as a middleman. Because it is highly classified, there is no way to find out more, but there is something behind the scenes regarding Mimic. I can feel it, before I make sense of it—”

“Something behind the scenes?” I look at Dazai. “There isn’t anything behind the scenes, Dazai, everything’s over. What happens next isn’t important, what I’m about to do is the same, is it not?”

“Odasaku,” Dazai says quietly. “I hope you will forgive me for speaking so strangely. But don’t go! Go and rely on something, hope that something good to happen next, that something will definitely happen. Ehh... Odasaku, do you know why I joined the mafia?”

I look at Dazai. Although we are old friends, not once has Dazai ever brought this matter up.

“I joined the mafia hoping that something would happen. Violence or death, instinct or desire, if I could hang around people who display these plainly, I would be able to see the qualities of mankind up close. This way, I would be able to find some—”

At this moment, Dazai pauses, and says:

“This way, I thought I would be able to find some sort of reason to live on.”

I look at Dazai, and Dazai looks at me.

"I wanted to become a novelist." I say. "Even if it was for a mission, I believed that if I killed someone, I would lose that qualification, so I didn't kill anyone. But, that too has ended, I no longer have that qualification. I only have one wish now."

"Odasaku!"

I walk off. Despite Dazai's shouts, I don't look back.

I walk westwards.

People walk in their own directions as usual. They must have places to go, people to see, homes to return to. That is the world people live in, the world I want to write into a novel. The kids too, should have walked towards such a world, become one of its members, each of them walking on the streets on their own.

—They have all obtained peace, peace that no one can take away from them.

I think about those words I heard Ango say a very long time ago.

Are the kids really in a quiet place now? They didn't become ghosts, roaming in the real world, right?

Like Gide – or me.

Walking along, I bump right into a short young man walking right towards me.

"Uwaaaah!"

I am completely fine, but the youth loses his balance, slumping over, the items he was carrying scattered on the ground.

"What are you doing! How can you not watch where you're going! Since your eyes are up so high, you should be able to clearly see what's in front of you, right? Ah— ah, the detective tools I bought for the president..."

I help the youth pick up the scattered items. There are notetaking papers, pens, a camera, and evidence storage bags for forensic use. It's as though he is some evidence collection personnel for a murder case.

"Are you the police?" I can't help but to ask.

"Police?" The youth's narrow eyes are narrowed even further, a look of utter disgust on his face. Don't put me on par with those useless bunch of people! Don't you recognise me? This is a name that all of Japan will recognise not far from now, you'd better remember it! I am the world's greatest detective, Edogawa—"

"Sorry." I interrupt the youth's words halfway. "I have urgent business; I'll be leaving first."

"Oi, oi, you're really stupid to pass up the opportunity to talk to me, a famous detective! Once you see my ability, you won't be able to not take me seriously! If you doubt me, I'll show you one of my hands. Let me think, the reason you're in a hurry to leave is—"

The cheerful, arrogant youth laughs and looks at me intently.

"You—"

His eyes shrink suddenly.

I can feel the air around the youth turning cold. In those pupils, in the depths of his squinted eyes, exists an inhuman radiance.

"You." In a calm voice, different from before, the youth says, "I won't harm you, but you cannot go to your destination. You should reconsider."

"Why?"

"Because if you go, you will..... die, hmm?"

I take out a new cigarette and light it. Back facing the youth, I continue heading westwards.

As I walk, I say to the youth behind my back:

"I know."

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BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, Part 5)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148093926368/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Enjoy! My proofreaders proofread faster than I can edit them again... please go thank @nakaharachuyaa @mIntyoonqi and @bananasaurr they're so good at what they do...

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Cutting through the forested path densely populated with oaks and other trees, I can see a bungalow.

The first thing I can see is the purple asbestos roof and the semicircle stained glass with religious motifs. Against the sun setting in the west, the bungalow hazily appears amongst the trees.

Climbing up the small path paved with gravel, I can see two Mimic soldiers carrying submachine guns who look like they are standing guard.

“Could I ask you something?”

I speak to the two people casually as I walk. Surprised, the Mimic soldiers point the muzzles towards me.

I have already pulled out my guns from their holsters on either side.

Two shots are fired from my left and right at the same time.

The bullets hit the Mimic soldiers' foreheads, shattering their skulls and passing through the back. The Mimic soldiers' blood and brain matter splatter onto the trees behind their backs; they lose their lives without even knowing what has happened.

Almost at the same time, the wet sound of corpses falling to the ground rings through the forest.

I de-cock my guns, continuing forward without sparing the bodies a second glance.

Approaching through the main door, I head towards the front porch.

I look towards the third floor loft near the roof. There is a sentry carrying a sniper rifle on the other side of the window. Because I had avoided the path that would get me noticed by the snipers when I was getting closer, even if I had already been directly below him, the other party would not have noticed the intruder.

I snap my fingers, signalling to the soldier. The sniper sentry notices the sound, surprised to see my silhouette. Before the soldier raises the sniper rifle, I have already raised my gun and shot the soldier through the head. The soldier falls a substantial distance backwards towards the bottom floor with a loud sound.

Hearing the sound of the sentry falling, the soldiers inside should notice something is off.

With my regular stride, I walk to the entrance hall of the front porch before stopping. I draw out a cigarette and light it, letting the filthy fumes fill my lungs.

I look at my own hands; hands that have just killed three people. No matter how I look at them, they are still my hands. These hands are no different from when I was avoiding to kill.

Killing intent does not exist in one's fingers, nor within the trigger, much less in the bullet. The only place that killing intent exists is in the depths of one's soul.

The inside of the bungalow gets noisier with the sound of angry cries, footsteps, and bullets being loaded into guns.

I move to the side of the front porch facing the main doors, pressing my back against the wall beside the carved stone pillar.

Back pinned to the hard stone wall, I stretch my hand out to the side, knocking against the wooden front doors.

At the same time, bangs loud enough to split the earth ring out, the main doors smashed to pieces by countless bullets. The main door is crushed into wood chips and flies apart.

I continue to raise my gun, side eyeing the scene. Five seconds, ten seconds.

After twelve seconds, capitalising on the moment when the soldiers are replacing the magazines, I pull out the grenade's pin, throwing it into the bungalow.

While the inside of the room explodes, I spit out the cigarette I was biting on.

Both guns raised, I jump into the room.

Crossing through the billowing smoke, bullets fly.

I lean forward and dive towards the ground, firing two shots at the same time.

The sparks from the muzzle make the room flicker.

Rolling forward, I change my direction of movement to a horizontal one, leaping towards a corner of the room while firing two shots.

The sparks from the muzzle illuminate the plaster, bloody fumes, and smoke from the explosion in the air.

The submachine guns' bullets bounce around beneath my feet. Predicting the point of rebound, I quickly run along the side of the wall, firing two shots.

Countless empty bullet shells fall to the ground, playing the music of the battlefield.

Finally, I raise both guns in my hands, firing two shots at the enemy in the middle.

Silence follows after.

I have dealt with all the soldiers that were in here when I barged in.

I survey the room.

The bungalow's entrance hall has become a reception room with a high ceiling. The stained glass near the ceiling lights the dust and smoke in the room up in an indistinct harmony of colours. The corpses of six Mimic soldiers lie below.

This number is a far cry from the enemy count that Dazai had mentioned. The banquet will still continue on.

On the other end of the carpeted staircase, the footsteps of soldiers from within the depths of the bungalow ring out. I can only see around five seconds with my ability. I cannot know what traps lie ahead inside, or what kind of enemies are waiting ahead.

I change the magazine and slowly climb the stairs.

After going up the stairs, there is a narrow corridor ahead. If the enemy charges from behind, I can hide behind the obstacles and shoot behind me. Such a gunfight strategy isn't too bad either.

I see the soldiers in the corridor ahead. There are four enemies advancing while firing submachine guns most suited for this sort of distance.

Leaning forward, I run wildly.

As I run towards the Mimic soldier right in front, I fire my gun. The bullet hits the soldier in the forehead and he falls backwards. I immediately slip into his embrace, using the soldier's body as a shield and fire two more shots.

The second Mimic soldier is struck in the throat and dies. The dead soldier's finger spasms, leaving a trail of bullet marks on the ceiling.

I kick away the dead soldier in the chest, rushing towards the soldiers behind.

In the gap of time when the third soldier pushes away the corpse, I go around the side, swinging my fist at his lower jaw. While his jaw is hit the other way, I fire a shot towards his head. A deep red fluid splatters onto the wall.

I jump to one side, avoiding a bullet fired from the last soldier's submachine gun. After which, I kick against the wall, jumping to dodge the levelled line of fire coming towards me. Once I have almost jumped right above the enemy, I fire my remaining bullets in one breath.

I land at the end of the corridor. The time since firing the first shot has only been a moment. After a long while, there is the sound of the soldier hitting the ground from behind.

Through that sound, I confirm that there are no remaining survivors and head forward.

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[July 28th \(125\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, Part 6)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148122043847/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Everything is starting to pick up!! Say thanks to my proofreaders @nakaharachuyaa, @mlntyoonqi, @bananasaurr they're great the best everything I could have asked for.

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At the end of the corridor is a spacious lounge facing the courtyard.

In the room, there are large heaters decorated in the style of the Middle Ages, red velvet armchairs, and a gold bookshelf large enough to house a team pennant.

I've heard that this bungalow was once the residence of foreign nobles.

According to prior investigations, this luxurious house's owner's assets were confiscated and returned to their home country during times of war. After that, it had been difficult to determine the rightful ownership of this house, so it waited patiently for its owner who would never return.

I stop in my tracks. I already know that there are remote detonated directional mines fitted beyond the door in front.

If I were to continue ahead, I would be caught in the explosion. The only way is to go over the wall and break them with bullets, so I raise my gun.

When I raise my guns, I realise I've screwed up.

There are remote detonated mines behind me as well. Before I had noticed the mines ahead, the people monitoring from somewhere else had already decided to detonate the mines behind.

My ability is to predict the future. *But the result of me changing my own actions can only be predicted in the moment after I change my action.* Hence, with my motion to "raise my gun to aim at the mines in front" as a trigger, when the trap springs one second later, I can only predict that one second before it happens.

Such is the case this time.

I jump forward forcefully. The high power explosives behind go off at the same time. Shrapnel and flames from the blast tear apart the back of my coat. As though pushed to the ground by the force of the explosion, I roll towards the floor, lying down while covering my head immediately.

The directional mines that were in front of me blow up as well. The horizontal impact hits my body.

This is a surprise attack orchestrated with my ability in mind, an attack from both the front and back directional mines. This enemy knows the characteristics and weaknesses of "the ability to predict the future" very well.

I see an image.

An image of soldiers grappling down from the large windows on the left and attacking.

I am still lying on the ground, hardly in a position to counterattack.

It has been approximately four seconds since the sudden attack.

Disregarding the consequences, I struggle to stand and will myself to pick up my gun.

There is a dull ache on the right of my abdomen. The shrapnel from the earlier explosion has cut into the unprotected flesh near my hipbone. Blood is spreading across my shirt.

Ropes can be seen hanging down from above on the other side of the window, as well as the soles of the descending soldiers' boots.

Groaning, I pick up my gun.

The windows are broken. As they jump in from above, I can count out eight soldiers.

There is no time to hide behind something for shelter.

The broken glass dances through the air. I can almost see the reflection of light in every single shard.

First, I fire two shots from the guns in either hand. The attack goes through the throat and head of the two people in front. The remaining soldiers land.

The hem of my coat flaps up as I turn my body, firing two low shots. This takes care of the two soldiers nearby.

The remaining soldiers raise their guns at me.

The glass shards finally fall to the ground, morphing into countless rays of light bouncing around.

The sparks in the guns' muzzles are released.

This is a gunfight carried out at a distance close enough for a melee fight. Flashes fill the room, dyeing the world a snowy white.

In this shining world, extremely small bringers of death fly by. I can see them.

I let my body fall level to the ground, avoiding bullets fired at an extremely close proximity.

I cross both hands, firing two shots with the guns in my left and right hands.

Turning my body so that my chest is facing upwards, I fire another two shots towards the enemies on my left and right.

My chest takes a hit and my body arches up. The bullet is trapped in my bulletproof vest. As though being hit by a metal ball, the attack causes me to stop breathing.

I've missed one person.

Pressing my hand against the floor littered with glass, I roll to dodge. I quickly sweep a foot at the enemy's legs before he can fire his submachine gun.

The falling soldier reaches one hand out to grab the collar of my coat, trying to drag me down as well. His actions are different from the other enemies. I can faintly see rank insignias on the breast of his uniform. He should probably be Mimic's deputy commander, Gide's trusted Chief of Staff.

I want to use the gun in my right hand to aim for his throat, but he uses the front end of the submachine gun to quickly knock away my gun. I fall to the ground in a heap with the deputy commander.

Trying to inflict a concussion, I try to use the base of my right palm to hit the deputy commander's lower jaw, but he dodges my attack. The sleeve of my right hand is grabbed and pulled behind my back. My elbow and wrist are twisted high. The enemy's intent is a joint lock. A dull sound comes from my shoulder.

If the enemy continues to apply force, my shoulder will be irreparably damaged.

However, he shouldn't engage in close combat with someone who has the ability to predict the future. From the very beginning, this situation was my intention.

With my free right hand, I grab my gun, arching my body and firing all my bullets towards the floor.

The sound of empty bullet shells dancing ring out like a crisp ringing bell.

The man twisting my arm loses strength, collapsing on the ground.

The bullets hit his throat. The bullets I'd shot towards the floor rebounded and entered his body.

Resisting the pain in my chest with difficulty, I check the bulletproof vest. It has blocked three bullets. I take off the vest and toss it to the ground. I can't say for certain if my ribs have cracked.

"Ooooh..."

Turning my head back, the deputy commander is still conscious. However, the gun wound is a fatal one, and he'll probably only be able to live for another ten minutes.

"Need me to give you one last shot?"

I raise my gun, aiming the muzzle at the deputy commander's head as I ask.

".....Aaah... Please..."

Perhaps due to his bleeding throat, the deputy commander replies with an inaudible voice.

"Any last words?"

"Thank you... for being willing to fight..."

The deputy commander shuts his eyes. The gun wound should be very painful, but he smiles slightly.

"The commander is ahead... Please save him..... Free him from this hell..."

I pull the trigger.

His skull shatters, blood and brain matter splattering on the floor. The deputy commander spasms, then stills.

Rising, I change the magazine and continue walking forward.

"Aah, I know."

[\[Next\]](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, Part 7)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148147793612/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

A brief respite. This part is hands down one of favourite parts of the novel, so please enjoy! Thanks to @nakaharachuyaa @mlntyoonqi and @bananasaurr for proofreading efforts once again.

[\[Previous\]](#)

Dazai is walking.

With no hesitation in his footsteps, he walks briskly, as though his heels are going to slice through the carpet.

The place Dazai is walking towards is the mafia's headquarters in the city. Dazai rides up the transparent elevator alone, pressing the button for the topmost floor and closing his eyes.

Once the elevator reaches its destination, Dazai opens his eyes. His pupils are fixated on the office straight ahead at the end.

Dazai tucks his chin in and walks forward.

The tall men in black standing in front of the office wordlessly block Dazai's way. Both are wielding automatic pistols.

"Stand down!"

Dazai doesn't even look at their faces. The two guards, twice as large as Dazai, freeze up at these words, taking one step back, as though being overwhelmed by his presence.

Not waiting for the guards' reactions, Dazai has already opened the doors to the office, entering in a rough and impolite manner.

Seated on the other end of the office is the Port Mafia's leader – Mori Ougai.

"Aiya, Dazai, how rare of you to come to the office of your own volition. Let me prepare some tea. I recently received some expensive tea leaves from Northern Europe. Paired with some cakes, it's simply divine—"

"Boss," Dazai interrupts him. "Do you know why I've come?"

Ougai does not reply this question, merely smiling slightly as he looks at Dazai.

After a long while, Ougai replies.

"Of course, Dazai. Is there urgent business?"

"That's correct."

"I promise no matter what it is, I will approve it." After saying this, Ougai smiles slightly. "If it is what the prodigy Dazai thinks, then there shouldn't be anything wrong. No matter the time, you've always made a great contribution to me and the Port Mafia, and I hope today will be no different."

As though having been embarrassed, Dazai falls silent. Even if it's Dazai, speaking to Ougai is like walking on the thin tips of knives. With a slight misstep, one will lose their arms and legs.

Dazai thinks for a moment, then speaks.

"Then, do you agree to mobilising the organisation's executive level gifted squad to storm Mimic's headquarters to save Odasaku?"

"That's a good start." Ougai nods. "Sometimes, speaking the truth will earn you the greatest negotiating power. You may, I agree. But can you tell me the reason?"

Dazai has yet to take his eyes off from Ougai, simply looking back at him. Within Ougai's narrowed pupils, there is an intelligent look that can perceive the depths of the opponent's spirit. It has the same radiance as the gazes that Dazai has cast upon all his enemies and colleagues.

"Right now, Odasaku is currently in the enemy organisation's base carrying out reconnaissance alone." Dazai says with an emotionless tone. "As an emergency measure, I have already sent mafia members in the vicinity to offer assistance, but the forces are simply not sufficient. If this goes on any further, a valuable ability user like Odasaku will die."

"But he is a junior member." Ougai tilts his head. "Of course, he is an important comrade. But is there a need to mobilise the executives to the frontline for support?"

"There is." Dazai interrupts. "Of course there is."

Ougai is silent.

Ougai looks at Dazai, Dazai looks at Ougai.

It is an eloquent silence. Both people understand the other's mentality, as well as the reasons for them to oppose one another.

"Dazai—" The one who wins this wordless battle of tongues, the one to open his mouth is Ougai. "I want to ask you something. I can understand your plan, but I'm afraid Oda *doesn't wish for anyone's help*. What are your views on this?"

Dazai wants to reply, but cannot find the words.

Ougai draws out an envelope from a filing cabinet, looking at it as he speaks.

"Dazai, as the boss, I am at the top of the organisation, but I am also a slave to the entire organisation. For the survival of the Port Mafia, I must automatically submerge my entire body in all the filth. Consuming the enemy's strength, allowing our own people to unleash their greatest potential, for the organisation's continued survival and prosperity, logically, no matter how cruel the action, I must carry it out happily. Do you understand what I'm trying to say?"

Ougai places the envelope in his hand on the table. It is a large, black, premium envelope with a small bronze pattern on the edges. It seems to be carrying something with no thickness inside.

Dazai's gaze carelessly falls onto that envelope.

After which, he suddenly stops breathing.

"That envelope is—"

Something inside Dazai's mind starts to move violently, flashing. That action seems to turn into some sort of physical vibration, numbing Dazai's skull.

"So that's how it is." Dazai says with a forcefully squeezed tone. His face is pale white. "So that's what this is all about."

Dazai turns his back to Ougai.

“I’ll be taking my leave.”

“Where are you going?” Ougai asks the silhouette of Dazai’s back.

“To find Odasaku.”

Dazai doesn’t turn back, walking to the doors of the office’s exit.

As Dazai reaches his hand to grab the decorated handle, a machine-like sound comes from behind his back. It is the sound of metal contacting, of small parts intermeshing.

Upon hearing the sound, Dazai stops moving his hand. Realising his failure, he closes his eyes.

Dazai lets out a small sigh, turning his body towards the office.

Four armed mafia members have silently appeared from the room next door. All of them are carrying automatic rifles, muzzles pointed at Dazai.

Despite this sight, Dazai isn’t surprised. He simply looks into the room, looking at Ougai.

Ougai maintains his posture from before, smiling at Dazai.

[\[Next\]](#)

Translation notes. The word used by Dazai and Oda for Mori is actually the same, but they can both mean boss or leader. I decided to make Dazai call him ‘boss’ because it sounds a little more informal, more Dazai-like, whereas ‘leader’ would sound a little more formal. Nothing particularly consequential, though!

Also for your information, I also use gifted/ability users quite interchangeably, depending on whether the translations flow better.

[July 29th \(149\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, Part 8)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148191535452/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Back to your regularly scheduled suffering! Thanks to @nakaharachuyaa @mlntyoonqi @bananasaurr they probably suffer the most. Please enjoy!

[\[Previous\]](#)

Passing through the battlefield's door and walking forward, I reach a spacious banquet hall with a high ceiling.

The ballroom is large enough to accommodate a hundred people dancing Baroque-style dances. On top of the three-storey high ceiling, there are old chandeliers draped down. Deep red curtains with gold trim hang on either side of the room. Signs of damage can be seen all over the curtains, as though lamenting its past glories, rendering the room even darker. There are a pair of oak doors at the front and back of the hall.

When I walk to the center of the room, a voice calls out from behind my back.

"Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies..."

I pull out both guns from my sides immediately, turning my head and raising them towards the direction of the voice.

That man is there.

Silver hair and clothes, the handsome undead spirit.

With my gun raised, I finish that sentence. "—If it dies, it produces many seeds."

The ghost squints and smiles.

"John 12:24, I didn't realise you were such a learned man, Sakunosuke."

Gide stands before the oak doors. There are no traps, no subordinates, no stance inviting a battle.

I accurately aim between the enemy's brows. All I need is to put a little pressure on my index finger and the bullet will pierce through its target, that is, dead center of this smiling man's forehead.

"Thank you for coming."

I aim at my target and fire.

Gide shifts his head slightly, avoiding the bullet.

"I've done something unforgivable to the children." Gide's expression doesn't change, walking over. "But it seems that there was merit in doing so."

Gide walks along the wall. The muzzle of my gun follows accordingly.

I take aim at the enemy's head and shoot again.

But Gide turns his head to one side, shifting to the left to dodge.

"You have the same look as me." Gide continues to smile, continuing to walk silently. "Like my subordinates, the look of one walking down the steps to live on."

Gide doesn't have a weapon in hand. Even though I shoot, he makes no motion of caution.

A chill runs down my back.

"Welcome, Sakunosuke. Welcome to our world."

Without warning, Gide pulls out a pair of guns and takes aim at me.

I do not react to that sudden motion, not because I am surprised – but I believe that even if he shoots, it will not hit me.

Our muzzles face each other in stillness.

The muzzle of my gun is locked onto Gide, likewise, the muzzle of Gide's gun is locked onto me.

"Aren't you a talkative man."

"Then, let's end our talk here."

I see an image.

Five seconds later, Gide fires his gun. One shot between my brows, one shot at my heart.

I just need to dodge somewhere.

To the side? No, he will predict this, adjusting the bullet's path to the side.

Down? No, even if I bend my body, it will be predicted and adjusted to accordingly.

Three seconds left.

At this moment, I realise something.

—I see, so that's how it is!

One second left.

As I fire both guns in my hands consecutively, I charge towards the enemy.

Just like this, hell begins.

Sparks from our guns' muzzles flash between the two of us.

Gide and I run towards each other, returning the bullets fired at each other, getting closer.

A few bullets sail past my ear, slicing up the hem of my coat.

I use the palms of both hands to knock the opponent's gun out. Gide's gun is pressed to the left, but still returns to the center as though drawing a circular path. Aiming at my chest, sparks fly from the "Grey Spectre".

We are close enough to grab each other's noses. There is no space to avoid the bullets fired on both sides parallel to our faces.

My judgement in that moment is to move my face towards the left to avoid the bullet on the right and to block the other bullet with the handle of my gun. As though having taken a beating, the impact and numbness courses through

my entire hand, sending the gun in my left hand flying.

On the other end of the gun, I can see Gide's crooked smile.

Gide has two guns, and I am short one, only one gun remaining. Just by looking at the numbers, I am obviously at a disadvantage.

—Do you see where one gun is aimed?

The gun in my right hand – I am still gripping it, having long aimed it at Gide.

I fire a shot.

Gide shifts his body substantially in an attempt to dodge. But he doesn't shift enough. The bullet hits his left upper arm, fresh blood spurting back.

"Uuuuuu..."

The gun is hit by a bullet and leaves his hand, tumbling onto the floor.

Gide leaps across the floor towards the back, increasing the distance between us.

"How does it feel to be unable to see the future?" I ask, raising the gun in my right hand.

"It feels like I don't belong in this earth... It's the best feeling." Gide replies.

No matter what future I predict, when using it as a reference to take measures to dodge, the other party will overwrite it and react accordingly. To solve this problem, there is an ultimate, simple method.

One just has to not rely on that ability.

Gide and I raise our remaining gun towards one another.

Gide smiles, revealing a half crescent row of teeth.

I have a similar expression.

[\[Next\]](#)

Translation notes.

I actually translated a phrase wrongly in a previous part! In part 3 and part 5 of chapter 3, Gide was described as 五官端正 (in third person in part 3, by Oda in part 5), which I wrongly interpreted as "having an upright posture". What this should have been was "a good set of features", or simply put, "handsome". I've also been told that the kanji in Japanese can mean "graceful/handsome/shapely". I've made the necessary changes already, sorry for that!

This did not occur to me until I was looking it up again for this part and stared in utter disbelief at how ridiculous the sentence was... but considering Oda actually describes Gide as good looking enough to be a movie actor if he was in a suit in the next sentence, please just have what might possibly be one of the strangest (gayest) ways to describe the enemy you want to kill, brought to you by Oda Sakunosuke.

[July 30th \(126\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, Part 9)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148247598657/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Thanks to my proofreaders! @nakaharachuyaa @mIntyoonqi @bananasaurr @e-ki truly the best... Scan by @akutagawapriize (all scans [here](#)). Please enjoy (read: suffer)!

[\[Previous\]](#)

Dazai looks at the muzzles pointed at him with a calm expression.

“The tea isn’t ready, Dazai.” Ougai says. “Alright, sit.”

Dazai doesn’t move.

A man in black goes around the front and presses the automatic rifle against Dazai’s forehead.

“Odasaku is waiting for me.”

“Sit.”

Dazai glances at the muzzle still pointed at his face, following which, he turns back towards the center of the room, standing right in front of Ougai, quietly speaking.

“I’ve been thinking. Between the mafia, Mimic, and the Black Special Ops Forces, who is the one manipulating these three organisations? When I realised Ango was a member of the Special Ability Department, I reached a conclusion. That conclusion was that this is the Special Ability Department’s plan. Their motive was to let the mafia and Mimic, two illegal organisations causing the government a headache, to kill each other off. If they were lucky, they would both perish together – I thought this was a playbook written by the Special Ability Department, that this was the real reason behind this war. *But I was wrong.*”

Dazai pauses after these words, looking at Ougai.

Ougai smiles, shrugging his shoulders, “I’m listening.”

“The person who painted this picture was you, Boss. Using the illegal organisation Mimic as a threat, you pulled the Special Ability Department onto the negotiation table. And the pawn in the center of this plan was Ango.”

Dazai speaks with half lidded eyes.

“Boss, the reason you sent Ango to infiltrate Mimic’s ranks was not to obtain information on Mimic. *Because you knew that Ango was a spy from the Special Ability Department from the very beginning.* Am I right?”

Ougai does not affirm or refute this, only saying, “Huh.”

“If you think about it that way, the meaning behind several truths will change accordingly. At the same time Ango passed us insider information on Mimic, he had to pass that information on to the Special Ability Department as well. They are undead ghosts that will not listen to negotiations or compromises, only seeking a battlefield. Such danger cannot be compared to the mafia. If this went on any further, conflict would break out between them and the government agencies. This is what the Special Ability Department thought. The next thing they thought of was to fan the flames of war between Mimic and the Port Mafia, manipulating matters by leaking information to Mimic through Ango. As long as Mimic bites the hook, the mafia has no reason not to fight back. Based on this line of thinking, they instructed Ango to engage in combat – all according to your plan.”

“You’re overestimating me, but it’ll still be troublesome for me.” Ougai smiles. “To the mafia, the government agencies are also a demon-like existence, an opponent that cannot be manipulated easily.”

“That is why you would come up with such a large scale plan – Because the value of that envelope is worth all that effort.”

Dazai points to the black premium envelope beside Mori’s hand.

“You’re right. The Special Ability Department is a demon-like existence. No matter how strong the Port Mafia becomes, we live in fear of the possibility of being raided after provoking the Special Ability Department. That is why by paying the price of exterminating Mimic, you have made a deal for that certificate.”

Ougai’s smile widens.

Dazai walks closer to Ougai, taking out the contents of the envelope.

Inside, there is a certificate. The words are written in beautiful calligraphy, and stamped with the government’s seal.

“This certificate is an agreement to carry out business as an ability user corporation – The ‘Ability Business Permit’.”

Explosives goes off and bullet shells bounce about, filling the large hall with a massive loud noise.

Gide takes aim at me, but I use my elbow to knock his gun away. The bullet brushes past the side of my face, flying past my ear.

I raise my gun, turning half a round level to the ground as though cutting through the air, aiming between Gide’s brows. His arm stretches out from below, grabbing my elbow. The bullet’s path shifts, shattering the crystal chandeliers.

Elbow against wrist, wrist against muzzle, I dangerously move out of the path of the opponent’s bullet. Bullets fly over my ear and under my jaw. At a distance close enough to carry out melee attacks, countless sparks fly from the gun muzzles, creating a dazzling wall between us.

Both Gide’s and my triggers hit the air at the same time, out of bullets.

While Gide and my right arms are crossed, we both start to change our magazines. As the empty magazines drop out, Gide whips out the spare magazine from his waist. I, on the other hand, take out the replacement magazine from my wristband.

Gide tries to reload the spare magazine into the gun. However, I wave my right arm to prevent this. Left hand still gripping the magazine, I swing it out in an uppercut.

The metal magazine cuts at skin, drawing a line of red across Gide’s face. Despite disrupting his posture, Gide still manages to finish loading. Back sticking closely to Gide as he turns in a bid to obstruct his shooting actions, I try and elbow him after half a turn. Gide ducks to dodge. After turning a full round, I have already loaded the magazine into my gun.

We point the muzzles at one another at the same time, using our left hand to grab the other’s right wrist.

We stand still in this miraculous pose.

Before my eyes is the muzzle. Before Gide’s eyes is also the muzzle. My left hand grabs Gide’s gun, and Gide’s left hand grabs mine too.

Before my left eye is the muzzle, the right, the unrelenting grey gaze.

“Sakunosuke... Amazing! Why haven't you appeared before me earlier?”

“Sorry. But today, I will fight with you to the end.”

If I try to break my bound wrist free, he will take the opportunity to shoot. But the same can be said of the other party. The delicate power balance forces us to fall still and engage in conversation.

“Why did you stop killing, Sakunosuke?”

“Why do you seek the battlefield, Gide?”

At this moment, I hear the sound of footsteps.

It is the sound of many people heading towards the ballroom.

“Are they your subordinates?”

“Are they your colleagues?”

The sound footsteps come from the front and back of the banquet hall. Judging by the sound, there are approximately ten people. If they are the footsteps of Mimic soldiers, I will be unable to handle them and Gide at the same time. I can only try and knock Gide down the moment they enter, then take care of the soldiers.

The footsteps are close to the room.

The oak doors are kicked open.

I time myself for this moment, pushing aside Gide's wrist. Gunshots ring out by my ears, flames from the explosives scorching the hairs on the side of my face, but I am not hit.

My bullet is avoided with the same action.

Gide and I cross elbows.

Thanks to our ability, we already knew who would barge in. The ones coming from the front are mafia members, behind, Mimic soldiers.

They enter around the same time. Gide and I bend elbows, entangled in each other's arms, *shooting the opponents behind us in this position.*

Mimic soldiers are hit by bullets and sent flying. The mafia members behind are subject to the same shooting.

I can see Gide's thoughts. Settle the intruders that have come forth to hinder us first. I have the same thought.

Gide tugs at my lapels. I tug at Gide's lapels as well.

Using one another as a pivot, we turn half a round, firing towards the enemies behind us again. Mimic soldiers face skyward as they fall.



[\[Next\]](#)

Translation notes:

I wish I was joking when I translated Odasaku's choice of words, but if you plug '奇妙' into Google translate it will also tell you that the word can mean fantastic/wonderful/marvellous.

[July 31st \(136\)](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, Part 10)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148292803317/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Thank you for 1000 followers!!! Please have this next instalment as thanks! Much thanks to @nakaharachuyaa @mIntyoonqi @bananasaurr @e-ki for proofreading they deserve gold stars...

[\[Previous\]](#)

This was once a banquet hall.

We are standing in the middle.

Empty bullet shells fall to the ground like the sound of applause.

Using each other as fulcrums, we continue to shoot at our enemies.

Back to back, we shoot at our enemies.

Clothes flapping in the air as we turn, we switch places.

Placing our guns on each other's shoulders and using them as pedestals, we shoot at our enemies.

The soldiers' fresh blood splatters on the walls.

Crossing shoulders, turning, we shoot at our enemies.

Only the sparks from gunpowder and empty bullet shells flicker around us.

Both Gide's and my blood loss from our gunshot wounds has already reached the limit. Our faces are pale, our vision blurry; only our concentration is sharp without compare.

Gide and I are dancing together in a place incomparably close to the abyss of death.

It is a place that is not of this world.

My ability automatically sees the future, carving what Gide is about to say into my mind.

"How is it, Sakunosuke?"

I have already predicted these words, replying before Gide can open his mouth.

"What are you referring to?"

In reality, I don't speak a word. Before I speak, Gide has already predicted what I am going to say, replying to me first.

"This is the world I chase after... I live to come to this world."

Neither of us have spoken a single word.

It is only through our abilities that we sense what the other wants to say, choosing to reply before the other speaks.

In the time spent thinking, our words can be sent to the other party, while the other party thinks about how to reply.

"Why do you seek it?"

"Why did you stop killing?"

It is a moment in forever where time doesn't seem to exist.

As our abilities mix with reality, it is impossible to judge which is the real world and which is the predicted future. It is a world beyond this world.

It is a world that no one except the two of us can reach. It is a world that cannot be reached if we do not kill one another.

"Originally, I wanted to become a novelist. Someone told me I should do that."

"A novelist?" Gide smiles in the stillness. "If it's you, it should be possible."

"Yeah."

A world where there is that possibility probably exists.

"I spoke to someone. That person gave me a novel, the last volume of the novel I'd been searching for. Before I read it, he even told me that it was a terrible book."

"How was the ending?"

"That book..."

"To obtain that permit, Boss, you had started planning a few years ago." Dazai stands in front of the office desk, continuing to speak. "It should be two years ago, when Ango travelled to Europe, that you started to roll out this plan. Gathering information there, you ordered Ango to get into contact with the enemy with the biggest hope, Mimic. The mystery of how Mimic left Europe and illegally migrated to Japan has a simple answer. Behind the scenes, the Port Mafia was the one assisting them. To make the Special Ability Department anxious, to force them to act, *you specifically brought the enemy organisation to Yokohama.*"

"Dazai." Ougai, who had been listening silently, opens his mouth to interrupt him for the first time. "This is an excellent deduction, there's nothing I need to correct. I want to ask you something. *What wrong is there to what I've done?*"

"....."

"I've already said it. I am always thinking of the entire organisation. As you can see, now that we've obtained the Ability Business Permit, in truth, the government has already acknowledged our illegal activities. Oda Sakunosuke is now gambling his life to exterminate the troublesome thugs. It's a reversal of fortunes! But why are you so angry?"

Dazai is silent. For the first time, Dazai is unable to explain his own feelings.

"I..."

—*Nothing is worth prolonging a painful life to pursue.*

—*Wake me up from this rotten world of a dream.*

"I... just..." Dazai forces the words out stiffly. "I just can't accept it. The one who secretly told Mimic where the orphans Odasaku was raising were hidden *was you*. Other than you, no one else could have obtained information

on the hiding place I chose. You killed the children – To get Odasaku, the only ability user who can go against Mimic's commander, to go forth and fight the enemy."

"My answer is the same, Dazai. If it's for the organisation's benefit, I'll do anything. Moreover, the Port Mafia gathers the city's darkness, violence, and illogical existences. As it stands, what else is there to say?"

Dazai understands. Ougai's logical calculations, thoughts, and plans are all for this organisation, the Port Mafia's sake. Logically speaking, Ougai is right and Dazai is wrong.

"But..."

Dazai turns and heads towards the exit.

In reaction, Ougai's subordinates point their guns at him simultaneously.

"You cannot go, Dazai." Ougai says with a tone persuading him to stay. "Stay here. Or do you have a legitimate reason to go to his side?"

"I want to tell you two things, Boss." Dazai turns his head, narrowing his eyes and looking at Ougai. "First, you won't shoot me, neither will you order your subordinates to shoot."

"Why? Because you're hoping that someone will shoot you?"

"No, because there is no merit in doing so."

Ougai smiles slightly. "Indeed. But the same can be said of you, there is no merit for you to defy me and go to his side, no?"

"That's the second thing, Boss. Indeed, there is no merit. I am going for one reason, *because he's my friend*. I'll be leaving now."

The subordinates raise their guns, fingers on the trigger.

Uncaringly, Dazai strolls towards the door.

The subordinates look at Ougai, requesting for him to give the order.

Ougai crosses his arms, carrying a slight smile as he looks at Dazai's back wordlessly.

Dazai passes through the door and heads towards the corridor, then disappears.

[\[Next\]](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, Part 11)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148343774772/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

I was conflicted about how I wanted to section these last few parts. This and the next part will be slightly shorter, but I can guarantee you that chapter 4 will have 13 parts, so please enjoy! As usual, thanks to @nakaharachuyaa @mIntyoonqi @bananasaurr and @e-ki for proofreading!

[\[Previous\]](#)

“The last volume was a very exciting book.” I say.

Before that, I had never read such a fascinating book.

Every line captured my heart, every character felt like myself.

The person who gave me that book’s critique was “a terrible book”, but I felt the exact opposite. I didn’t even eat my food, finishing the book in one go. After I finished reading it, I immediately started reading it a second time.

After finishing that book, I felt like every brain cell in my body had been reborn into something vastly different from before. I even think that the world before and after I had read that book had changed into something completely different.

Before that, I could only kill. Killing for a mission, taking away human life. That book opened my eyes, just like the sun rays of dawn.

However, that book had a flaw.

A few pages near the end had been torn out. Because of that, I had no way of knowing an important part of the plot. Among the characters that appeared, there was a killer. It was the scene where he spoke of his reason to stop killing.

Why did that killer stop killing? There wasn’t enough information to deduce this in the other pages, leaving me feeling irritated. That scene formed a critical turning point of the story and was obviously an important scene to understand the killer. I couldn’t find a trace of that book in secondhand bookstores, making it difficult to ascertain the truth. Even if I wanted to inquire about it, after that, that bearded man never appeared before my eyes ever again.

After feeling irritated, the conclusion I reached is—

—*Then, you write it.*

The conclusion I reached was “to write it myself”.

I decided to become a novelist, to write the story of the man before he stopped killing into a novel.

To become a novelist, I must sincerely understand how people live.

So I stopped killing.

In the last volume of that book, in the page before those that were ripped out, there was a line. It is a line said by the main character to the killer.

“Humans live to save themselves. They will understand this before they die.”

After I stopped killing, I always thought about its meaning.

Perhaps there is no deeper meaning. It might just be a connecting line between two pieces of information.

But inconceivably, when I see this line, I think of the bearded man who gave me this book.

I think about it today.

Did that man know I was working as an assassin?

Was it because he knew and wanted me to stop killing, that he said those words to me?

Giving me the last volume, tearing out those few pages, telling me to “write it myself”.

Did that bearded man want to tell me to “save myself”? I have almost no doubt this was the case.

The first time we met, the man told me his name.

I’d always forgotten it until recently, I finally remembered it.

The man’s name was Natsume Souseki.

The author’s name on the cover of the book was the same name.

“I was once a hero.” Gide said.

Gide had gone to the battlefield.

For his home country, for righteousness, to stand with his comrades fighting by his side.

During the great war that had engulfed the entire world, he obtained an uncountable number of victories and saved so many comrades, it is difficult to estimate.

Gide was once a hero.

Becoming a soldier, protecting his homeland, fighting for the people who lived on the soil he grew up on, he believed that dying for them was his destiny.

During one of the campaigns, Gide, with only forty subordinates, attacked a walled city guarded by six hundred enemies. They toppled all their enemies and occupied the city.

However, that was plotted by their allies themselves. At that time, peace talks in their country had almost been completed. In order to exterminate the enemy’s communication centre, through unjust means of obtaining the enemy’s communication network, the military chief of staff executives used Gide.

Because the attack was carried out after the truce, Gide’s offense on the walled city was a war crime. Their allies sent soldiers to subjugate Gide and the other traitors. In order to survive, Gide and the forty others had to seize the enemy’s equipment, disguising themselves as the enemy to break through the encirclement.

Countless compatriots came forth to kill the traitors. Gide and the others picked up the enemy’s arms – the pistol known as the “Grey Spectre”, donned the enemy’s uniform, killing the fellow citizens of their homeland.

Becoming the enemy troops in disguise, becoming the ghosts of the long dead enemy troops.

Killing their compatriots and breaking through the encirclement, they survived. But a place where they could live on in this world no longer existed. They were war criminals, dead men, an army with no master.

From that moment on, they roamed. They became illegal mercenaries, handling dirty work that could not be disclosed. At this point, there was no hero in sight. Their lives, which should have ended fighting to protect their homeland, unused by any person, simply became faded and dirty, sinking to a point of no return.

There were also people in the squad who committed suicide. Gide didn't stop them; he didn't have the words that could stop them.

But there were some who couldn't die. They are out-and-out soldiers. To commit suicide would negate their identities as soldiers. Fighting, getting injured, losing their comrades – despite all of this, they still stood up again. That is the meaning of their past identities as soldiers and what drives the blood that makes them soldiers now.

They sought the battlefield, searching for a place that could prove that they were soldiers. A place where they could find out why they fought, even if they died, to help them remember what kind of person they were.

They became the ghosts that wandered the battlefield.

Losing their homeland, losing their pride, stray undead spirits that continued to fight.

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BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, Part 12)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148392529722/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

Hop on we're going straight to hell! Thanks to my proofreaders @nakaharachuyaa @mlntyoonqi @bananasaurr and @e-ki for looking this over so quickly!

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Gide says a long passage. At the same time, I too say a very long passage.

Time goes on indefinitely. Between the two of us, we continue to see what the other is about to say one step ahead of the other.

In the real world, not even a second has passed. In the real world, I am shooting Mimic soldiers, while Gide is shooting mafia members.

In this world, I will aim my gun's muzzle at Gide next. Gide will also aim his gun's muzzle at me.

"It's almost time for it to end." In the world that continues on, Gide speaks.

"Tell me, Gide." In the world that continues on, I speak. "Did you all never think of searching for a different place? Couldn't you have changed your lifestyles midway? Besides seeking death on the battlefield, is there no other way?"

"Change our lifestyle midway? I couldn't do that sort of thing." Gide smiles, a melancholic radiance flickering in his grey eyes. "I swore to my partners that I would die as a soldier. Anything other than that would be impossible."

Our muzzles are aimed at one another. But on the other hand, we silently face each other in our world of forever, like friends engaging in conversation.

Gide looks at me. I can see the sincerity in his gaze.

"But... It may be possible. If we had changed our lifestyles at an earlier time, we might have been able to become something other than soldiers... just like how you stopped killing. If I was as strong as you, perhaps one day, I too..."

There are only two people alive in the great hall now.

Our muzzles are aimed at each other's hearts.

Gide isn't wearing a bulletproof vest. My bulletproof vest had been discarded in the earlier fight. Once our chests are hit, the wound will be fatal.

The trigger has already been pulled. The bullet slides out from the gun.

But we just smile as we face each other.

In the long, long time spent conversing, we seem to understand each other like old friends who have known each other for many years.

—They have already confirmed that similar abilities counteracting one another will result in the loss of control over the ability and will cause it to develop in a hard to see, unpredictable direction.

Is this world "The Oddity of Abilities"?

"I still have one unfinished matter." I say. "I didn't say goodbye to my friend. In this world, there's a man who has always considered me as a 'normal friend'. He feels disinterested with this world."

"Is that man the same as me, seeking death as well?"

"No." I say. "I don't think so. At the beginning, I thought you and Dazai were very similar, unable to see the value of your life, hoping for death, hence jumping into a world of violence and fighting. But that's not the case. That guy is just a child who's too smart. Just a crying child who's been left alone in the darkness, a world of nothingness far emptier than the world we can see."

That guy's head is too brilliant.

That is why he's always so lonely.

Ango and I could stay by Dazai's side because we can understand the loneliness that revolves around Dazai. Even though we are by his side, we would never step within.

But now, I'm a little regretful that I never stepped into that loneliness impolitely.

Our guns each fire a bullet.

The bullets are sucked into our chests.

"Till the very end, the bullets you shot were so outstanding." Gide smiles. "I'm going to meet my subordinates. Say hello to the children for me."

Both of our bullets find their mark.

At this moment, the "oddity" vanishes.

The bullets pierce our chests, through our clothes, through the back.

Gide and I fall backwards in the same pose at the same time.

At this moment, I hear footsteps.

"Odasaku!"

[\[Next\]](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Chapter 4, End)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148441911605/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-chapter

This chapter has been a wild ride from start to end. Much thanks to your proofreaders @nakaharachuyaa @mIntyoonqi @bananasaurr and @e-ki they're honestly the best!!

[\[Previous\]](#)

Dazai sprints through the bungalow, rushing into the banquet hall.

Be it along the way or inside the hall, there are many corpses.

Dazai opens the oak doors forcefully, spotting his fallen friend ahead.

"Odasaku!"

"Dazai..."

Dazai rushes towards Odasaku's side, checking the severity of the wound. The bullet has pierced through his chest and blood is pooling on the floor – it's obviously a fatal wound.

Dazai falls to his knees, kneeling by Odasaku's side.

"You're an idiot, Odasaku, you're a big idiot!"

"Yeah."

"To accompany this sort of guy into death, you're an idiot!"

"Yeah."

Odasaku smiles. There is a look of satisfaction on his face – an expression that only someone who has accomplished something and paid the price for it can have.

"Dazai... I have something to tell you."

"No, don't speak. We might be able to save you. No, we'll definitely be able to save you. So don't be like this..."

"Listen to me!" Odasaku raises his bloodied hand to clasp Dazai's. "You once said that "If you immerse yourself in a world of violence and blood, perhaps you would be able to find a reason to live on." ..."

"Aah, I said that, but that sort of thing now..."

"It can't be found."

Odasaku says with a low voice. Dazai looks at Odasaku.

"You should know this yourself. No matter whether you're on the side of killing people or saving people, there will never be anything that can surpass your mind. There is no place in this world that can fill your loneliness. You will linger in the darkness forever."

—*Wake me up from this rotten world of a dream.*

At this moment, Dazai realises for the first time.

Odasaku understood him far beyond what Dazai had ever thought. He had already reached close to his heart, the place near the centre of his heart. Before this, Dazai had never noticed there was someone who understood him so well.

For the first time in his life, Dazai wanted to know something from the depths of his heart. Hence, he brings up the question to the person before him.

“Odasaku... I... What should I do?”

“Go to the side that saves people!”

Odasaku says.

“Since both sides are the same, become a good person. Save the weak, protect orphans. Regardless of whether it’s justice or evil, to you, there isn’t a big difference between the two... But, doing that would be better.”

“How do you know that?”

“I know, I know this better than anyone else.”

Dazai looks at Odasaku’s eyes.

Odasaku’s eyes radiate with conviction. The words are clearly said with some sort of strong basis. Is it past experience? Or perhaps someone’s suggestion? —He is trying to show Dazai the path he once walked. Dazai understands this.

Dazai can trust it.

“I understand... I’ll do that.”

“‘Humans live to save themselves. They will understand this before they die.’... Well... said...”

Odasaku’s expression is quickly losing colour. He smiles, face pale.

“I really want to eat curry...”

With trembling fingers, Odasaku draws out a cigarette from his coat, bringing it to his mouth in a strenuous action.

As he takes the matches out, his fingers have no more strength. Dazai receives the matches, lighting the cigarette.

Odasaku closes his eyes, inhaling the lit cigarette, smiling in satisfaction.

The cigarette falls to the ground.

Dazai continues to kneel by Odasaku’s side, head tilted upwards, eyes shut.

His tightly closed lips tremble slightly.

The cigarette smoke rises.

No one speaks.

[\[Epilogue\]](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Epilogue)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148493268219/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era-epilogue

I decided not to section the epilogue into two parts, so please have this treat! If you thought the suffering ended, you were wrong. Thanks to @nakaharachuyaa @mlntyoonqi @bananasaurr and @e-ki for proofreading as always!

Epilogue

After the fighting ends, the streets are revived to their former grandeur.

On the surface, the streets look no different from before the war. The economy is active, people rise and sleep, and the grand occasions of the day and violence of the night playing repeatedly.

No matter whether a regular society or a world of criminal gangs, nothing appears to have changed.

A small propeller-driven airplane flies over the skies looking over the coastline.

There are only a few passengers on the airplane.

“In an hour or so, we’ll reach the landing site of the next mission.”

In the passenger seat, a young man in a suit speaks.

“Ahh, I know.”

The man in round spectacles is sitting on an adjustable seat by the window, earnestly looking over the photos in his hand.

“...Inspector Sakaguchi, are those photos the next target?” the young man in a suit says to him.

The man in round spectacles – Ango – hurriedly stows the photos away in his clothes, as though trying to hide something from his colleague.

“No, it’s nothing. These are personal photos.”

Putting away the photos, Ango shifts his gaze towards outside the window, gloomily looking at the city below.

A few black shadows run frantically through the sewers of Yokohama’s concession.

Three residual Mimic soldiers are fleeing from the dark underground sewer. They are the defeated soldiers who had survived the fight in the bungalow because they were not at the frontlines.

The black cloth from behind extends like a blade, slicing one of the Mimic soldiers into two.

The remaining Mimic soldiers turn back, firing in a sweep with submachine guns. Sparks from the muzzle flicker in the sewers, disrupting the darkness.

“—Useless.”

The youth in the black coat appears from behind. Like a live animal, the black coat dances in the narrow tunnel, ruthlessly pursuing the soldiers to harm them.

“Give me something even stronger– even better! Until that person acknowledges me, no matter if it’s soldiers, guns, or ability users! I won’t lose to anyone! So look! Look at me!”

Akutagawa cries out as he speeds up the dance of slaughter. Those cries that could be called sorrowful are sucked into Yokohama’s night.

On one of the hills overlooking Yokohama’s streets, in the center of a mountain road filled with greenery, there is a cemetery where one can see the ocean.

There are several new graves lined in a row. The snowy white epitaph has no name carved on it.

Dazai stands before that epitaph.

Dazai is dressed in black funeral attire, a bouquet of white flowers in his hands.

“...”

A strong sea breeze blows by and Dazai narrows his eyes, the bouquet making a rustling sound.

“The photo... I’ll just put it here.”

Dazai takes out one photo, placing it before the epitaph.

The three people in the photo, in a moment where time has stopped, have smiles that will never disappear carved onto them.

“I really wanted to let you try that hard tofu...”

Dazai shuts his eyes, standing in his original position, unmoving.

In the affluent parts of Yokohama’s city center stands a blue building, the mafia’s headquarters.

In the office on the top floor of that building, Ougai’s head rests on his palm.

“‘Assist the aforementioned without asking further questions so that he may complete his investigation calmly and with composure.’, was it...?”

There are countless information reports scattered on the table. They are reports of the mafia’s territorial losses. On top of the messily placed information is the piece of paper Ougai had written himself, the so-called ‘Silver Oracle’. It was retrieved from the bungalow after the fighting had ceased.

Ougai picks up the paper to look over with disinterest.

The subordinate standing on one side opens his mouth to speak.

“Leader, Executive Dazai-san has been uncontactable for two weeks. To decide the next executive, it should be time to call for a five-boss conference...”

“Hm... that’s true.”

Ougai replies, unconcerned, starting to fold the paper in his hand.

“Don’t convene the executive meeting. Just keep Dazai’s spot empty.”

Ougai gazes towards the reports scattered on the table.

Even if one added up the financial losses and talented subordinates lost, the organisation had still obtained enough benefits to offset these losses. Dazai's disappearance had long been predicted as well. Looking at it logically, it was the best outcome, all according to plan.

Ougai folds the paper into a weird-looking airplane shape. Head still resting on his palm, he fires the paper airplane with his fingers.

The crooked paper airplane descends in a matter of seconds, falling to the floor.

"It's become boring..."

Downtown Yokohama. Electric signs in a variety of colours stand like trees. Even though it is late, it is still crowded.

In a small bar with orange lanterns hanging outside, a tall, white-haired man sits at a table alone.

This is a crowded, cheap bar. The tall, white-haired man drinks the alcohol in his glass alone with a serious expression.

"To think, the leading figure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs drinks alone in such a cheap bar... What incomparable loneliness, Chief Taneda."

The sudden voice of a young man in the opposite seat causes the white haired man – Taneda, to raise his head in surprise.

"You are..."

"Let me pour you a drink."

Sitting in the opposite seat, the smiling young man – Dazai, tilts the bottle, pouring alcohol into the glass.

Chief Taneda accepts his poured alcohol, finishing it in one shot, looking intently at Dazai.

"Your face appears regularly on my reports, a frequent guest that needs to be carefully monitored – How did you know about this place?"

"Most things can be known with some investigation." Dazai smiles, shrugging his shoulders.

"You should have temporarily disappeared from the organisation... Do you have some business?"

"I'm looking for a new job. Do you have any place you'd recommend?"

Chief Taneda looks at Dazai in surprise.

Dazai's face is all smiles.

"I can't immediately believe this. There are a mountain of questions to ask..." Chief Taneda scratches his chin with his fingers. "Do you want to come to the Special Ability Department? If that's the case—"

"Please allow me to reject that suggestion." Dazai smiles bitterly. "Places with too many rules don't suit my personality."

"Then, what do you hope for?"

“A place where I can help people.” Dazai replies immediately.

“Your ledger is too marred. To clear it, you have to lay low for around two years. But... Let me answer your question first. It's not as if I cannot find such a place.”

“Let's hear it.”

“There is an armed organisation comprised of ability users. They're in charge of handling grey areas, troublesome matters that cannot be entrusted to the military or city police. The director there is a man with a good heart, he might be able to grant your wish.”

Dazai nods, closing his eyes, as though thinking of something important. Following which, he opens his eyes, having made a firm resolution, and asks:

“What is the name of that organisation?”

“Name? That company's name is—”

End of Epilogue


[\[Afterword\]](#)

[August 5th \(202\)](#)

[# dazai osamu and the dark era# bsd light novel# sakaguchi ango# mori ougai# dazai osamu# bungou stray dogs# bsd novel# bsd# mine: translations# x# xx# gently lowers readers into a bathtub of salt water](#)

1. [Show more notes](#)

BSD Novel: Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era (Afterword)

 nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148513453575/bsd-novel-dazai-osamu-and-the-dark-era

I thought it'd be important to have this translated as well and will hopefully shed a bit more light on the premise of the story and the necessity of Dazai/Ango/Oda's narratives. Your proofreaders @nakaharachuyaa @mIntyoonqi @bananasaurr and @e-ki deserve the world for proofreading this?? Like holy shit please go thank them!!

For the very last time, without further ado.

Afterword

Good evening, I am Asagiri.

Through the web, I ordered what was rumoured to be Oda Sakunosuke-sensei's favourite Osaka raw egg curry rice to eat. It's very spicy! But it's very delicious. The hand I used for drinking water never stopped moving. The second after I finished eating it, I had already planned to eat it again. It's that sort of curry. To the readers reading this in the middle of the night, sorry about this!

That being said, after this "Bungou Stray Dogs" novel, "Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era", is added, we now have two volumes.

Although the first light novel volume "Dazai Osamu's Entrance Exam" is set two years before the manga, this is a story set four years' prior about Dazai's time as a mafia executive.

The origin of the book's title is modelled after the artist Pablo Picasso's initial painting style "The Blue Period". During literary master Dazai Osamu-sensei's youth, he too participated in fairly unruly activities, but the Dazai Osamu in "Bungou Stray Dogs" isn't too different, going through a dangerous period of time; not of "youth", but a "dark spring".*

Then, the following is digression.

The trigger that birthed this novel is a photo.

The literary masters Dazai Osamu, Oda Sakunosuke, and Sakaguchi Ango were known as authors of the "buraiha".

It is said that the three of them would gather at a bar in Ginza. As they drank, they would talk about things from the literary world, their novels, their family; about meaningless things in the world whilst drinking and chatting.

In the Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature, there is a picture of the three of them happily chatting (the one who took the photograph is the photographer Tadahiko Hayashi). Dazai Osamu placing his leg on a barstool in a playful manner, Oda Sakunosuke smiling at the lens, Sakaguchi Ango holding a glass in one hand, ear turned to listen to Dazai speak. There is an unthinkable relaxedness in front of the camera (Because cameras at that time were ridiculously expensive, every time one took a photo, it would take great effort to change the spotlight), one can feel that atmosphere of happiness. The three people have long become representatives of the literary world, but their relationship was fairly close, suggesting that they were "friends". Such a similarly resonating relationship cannot be easily obtained; once lost, it cannot be returned. Even though we are not literary masters, we can strongly relate to this.

Yet, just nine days after that photo was taken, Oda Sakunosuke coughed up large amounts of blood due to tuberculosis and died.

At the funeral, Dazai Osamu delivered a eulogy titled “Oda! You did very well!” After that, Dazai Osamu and Sakaguchi Ango left this world as well, only leaving behind the photo.

“Holding onto the pieces of what will never return”, hence became the starting point of this story.

Everyone knows “Bungou Stray Dogs” is not just filled with similarities between the real life authors, even the differences and opposites of what actually happened in history are numerous (For example, Dazai Osamu has always idolised Akutagawa Ryunosuke). Even though it is not true to history, there is also no problem with looking at it as a standalone story.

However, I feel that there are some glories left by the authors (For example, one line in this work, or something left in that photo) which are the qualities of the literary masters, things that they have left behind for the world. Without these, I believe that this work (if I had to praise it) would not have the value of the name “literary masters”.

Although it has become a serious bunch of words, but to everyone’s fortune, the light novel series which has received good reviews is planning to release a third volume. To release four tankobons in a year and three novels, it’ll be a very busy working schedule, but please continue to look forward to the popular “Bungou Stray Dogs”, everyone.

Lastly, I must thank the person who has contributed the beautiful picture inserts and handsome character designs, the “Bungou Stray Dogs” partner’ – Harukawa 35-sensei, as well as the editors, publicity, wholesalers, and bookstore clerks who have put in effort for this piece of work!

Let’s meet in the next volume!

Asagiri Kafka

Translation notes: The word youth in Chinese is written ‘green spring’, which suggests a time of blooming, whereas Asagiri replaces ‘green’ with ‘black’.

buraiha is basically a term you can translate as hoodlum faction/school of decadence. Google it for more information!

Also, if you’re interested, @multi-chrome has dug up the photos mentioned above [in this post](#).

[August 6th \(147\)](#)

the end.



nkhrrchy.tumblr.com/post/148517758919/the-end

I started on this endeavor exactly two months ago one fine day in June, some time after I uncovered some online fan translations of the novel in Chinese. Then I found out there was in fact an official version in bookstores and I suppose the rest is history. It's been a crazy two months bringing *Dark Era* to everyone! This blog had a hush hush following of like 10 people and then it erupted and here we are, all 1000 or so followers who have stuck with me till now.

It's been a journey of learning for myself, of course! I can now tell you parts of a gun and stuff I wouldn't have found out otherwise, and I can tell you for a fact that they can teach you to speak/read/write Mandarin Chinese but they sure as hell don't teach you how to be effectively bilingual in both. It's been a real joy to be able to translate *Dark Era* for English fans. This translation is my baby I've seen growing tumbling and stabbing me in the gut for what it's worth, so I'm kind of thankful and proud of it.

Thank you for joining me on this, no matter which point you started from, be it from the very beginning, halfway through, when all the shit started going downhill in chapter 4, or even if you're reading this way after I've finished translating! Thank you for those who have religiously liked every single one of my posts, even the dumb ones, thank you for patiently waiting between chapters or when I was busy and couldn't put things up in a timely manner. You guys are some of the most understanding readers I've seen in my life.

Thank you to everyone who's listened to me shitposting and rant endlessly on about fictional characters, [@fukasenanaio](#) [@confused-eevee](#) [@soukoku-scenarios](#) [@cinnatrouille](#) [@cillytourtel](#) just to name a few that I've had the honour of getting to talk to over Tumblr's shitty little messaging feature... It's been a blast.

And of course, I definitely have to thank my proofreaders!!! [@nakaharachuyaa](#) for being the *first* reader I remember who liked the first part of the prologue and offered to help almost immediately with the next part, [@mlntyoonqi](#) for joining it shortly after in chapter 1! [@bananasaurr](#) for a goddamn blast of a time writing shitty AUs with me and humouring me with her quality art and fixing the translations to flow so much better and [@e-ki](#) for joining us near the end with chapter commentary and lots of yelling over Oda and Gide and Japanese know-how to deliver parts of chapter 4 as soon as possible!

Honestly, it feels like I can't give my proofreaders enough credit for what they do especially double kat for proofreading over *Pastebin and Tumblr messaging* pointing out errors line by line (how the fuck did I even think that was a good idea??) and even after the first chapter all they had from me are godawful phone scans of the chapters (which I painstakingly had to take photos of with my phone while keeping the book held open as flat as possible with my hands and feet, it was a ridiculous sight) and being able to check against the translations with it... that's effort and they deserve every ounce of thanks you can give, so **please go and thank them** they deserve it so much!!

Here's some words from your proofreaders as well (I didn't mean for this to get so long but *one of the Kats*..... these afterwords are pretty representative of your proofreaders imo)

[@nakaharachuyaa](#)

Hi guys! I hope you enjoyed the pain as much as we did! It was one emotional rollercoaster from start to finish. Ironically, it was the tofu which failed to kill Dazai which destroyed me the most when Dazai brought it up again at the end ;_;

I am so grateful for all the kind messages and friends I have managed to make along the way and holy shit all of you need to bow down to nkhrrchy because they are the most hard working and

amazing person!

Thank you very much!! <3

@mIntyoonqi (Tumblr was always an asshole and never?? Let me tag them??)

Hello everyone, Proofreader Kat 2 (mIntyoonqi) speaking!

I... I don't even know where to begin. It's hard to believe this project is finally over.

Let me start by saying that when I first began a manga series about literary authors as detectives, I had no idea I would become invested to the extent of wanting to translate an entire light novel from Chinese. And yet here I am, several months later, screaming and crying over authors turned fictional characters and???? How?? did my life?? turn out this way??????

This is the first time I've been part of a translating project, and initially I was just looking to learn more about Dazai's past. He's easily one of BSD's most fascinating characters for me—I'm always attracted to characters who struggle to be (and to some extent are awful at being) good. There's just something wretchedly human about it. And isn't it interesting that Dazai's ability, which nullifies other abilities, is called "No Longer Human" when arguably it's Dazai who reduces ability users to being simply human? Much of Dazai's canon manga behavior is contradictory, doing the right thing with the wrong methods, manipulating and seemingly looking down upon righteous intentions, to the point where I had to wonder: why is a person like Dazai even trying to be 'good'?

That's the question I initially went into this light novel looking to answer. BUT BOI LET ME TELL U A THING!!11!1 If my type is characters struggling to be good then Odasaku ate my heart, chewed it up, and spat it back out. I'm writing this at like 3 AM so I don't have any coherent thoughts otl but wow for such a seemingly straight-forward character Odasaku is sometimes more difficult for me to understand than Dazai. At first it seems like Odasaku is being presented as a foil: a mafia member trying to take the moral highroad in this world of darkness. But is that? Really what he's doing???? What does Odasaku really want from his life????? Surprisingly I actually really truly do not understand Odasaku but that's part of what makes his character so intriguing.

(Gide don't even get me started on Gide you will have to ask me personally for my thoughts on Gide and OdaGide because wow tumblr's post character limit.)

(Also Buraiha trio. I would die for them to be happy. I would kill for them to be happy. WHY CANT THEY JUST BE HAPPY highkey breaks down into tears.)

AND JUST WHEN U THOUGHT IT WAS OVER. THERE WAS. THE PHUCKING. EPILOGUE. AND AFTERWORD. It was like a buy-one-get-one-free of sadness and pain. "Holding onto the pieces of what will never return." Literally how dare the goddamn epilogue hurt me like this?????? How does one even begin to grapple with such a concept??? This sentiment—this desperate, ugly, futile struggle—is so so so human. This type of theme in literature is what I live for.

But now, back to Dazai and my original question: why is someone like Dazai even trying to be 'good'? Before I even attempt to explain the answer I arrived at, first there's one line of Dazai's that struck me really hard in canon: "killers have no right to be kind, is that what you think?" And cue a brief reference to Odasaku. The first time I read that chapter, I couldn't get that out of my head. It's plenty poignant on its own, but there's something about having that line come from Dazai of all people. Kindness. It's not a right. It's not innately bestowed upon a select few by genetics nor is it equivalent

to society's definition of legal. Dazai didn't have his eyes opened in a tragic epiphany to his inner goodness that was there all along. Even Odasaku admits that to Dazai, being on the side of justice probably won't make a difference. Ultimately, what makes a difference—what reveals so much about Dazai, to me—is that Dazai chooses to be on the side that saves people.

Of course, I don't know that that's what Asagiri intended for me to interpret. It's possible that Dazai, the sly and enigmatic character that he is, has escaped my understanding completely. But the light novel has given me an entirely new appreciation for Dazai among other characters, and if it's done the same for all of you then I can happily say that Asagiri and the translating team have done our jobs.

Lastly I just want to say thanks so much to nkhrchy for letting me be a part of this incredible project. It's been such an integral part of my summer and it was an honor to work with all my fellow proofreaders. And thanks to all of you who've been part of this wild ride! Pls come scream with (or at) me about bsd bread suffering and death anytime.

Best,
Kat2 (mIntyoonqi)

@bananasaurr

> [endless screaming as i fall into the pits of never ending bread and suffering and odagide]

> PLEASE ADD IN THAT I LOVE U FOR TRANSLATING THIS UR THE BEST KAYAK CAPTAIN EVER

> pls add to my afterword: ben kills me all the time

@e-ki

hello! it's e-ki! though i joined the proofreading team late, i was following the translation with the japanese version until i finally decided to join. right in time for the pain! anyways, i have to say that odasaku is just. wow. he's an amazing character (my favorite in the series, actually) but he's so depressing. everything that happens to him is so terrible that i just wish that he could have worked at a café instead of joining the mafia _(_ε:)_ this is the only cafe shop au that i wish for. someone give this to me.

With that, translations for Dazai Osamu and the Dark Era are officially over. I would like to request that you **do not reproduce this material in any form without my explicit knowledge and consent**. I've only given this permission to three people for translating it into another language (Indonesian by kaien-bsd/hollymidday and Spanish by hopeless-masquerade), and I appreciate if you can honour my request. If you would like to read the novel, please read it from this blog. Thank you for your understanding on the matter.

If you can, **please support the official release** as well! You can find it on the [official site](#) or [Kinokuniya](#) ([Chinese version](#) too!) for US (and Kino also has stores in other parts of the world, use the ISBN number). Yen Press is known for doing English translations of light novels as well, so you can hopefully keep your fingers crossed that they will be produced in English as well in the near future.

What will happen to this blog now? I will still be taking asks for anyone who has any questions. People are always free to message me privately as well and hit me up to discuss anything they'd like related to the light novel or the series in general and I will do my best to answer! I'll probably start reblogging (and cross-reblogging) more Fukuzawa-related stuff in a bid to keep this up as a Fukuzawa appreciation blog. I might post the occasional shitpost, word vomit, what have you. I may continue to put up my own content, mixes, gifs, and the like, but updates will not nearly be as frequent as they used to be. If there's ever a small thing in Mandarin you'd like translated, feel free to let me know and I'll be more than happy to do a little favour. Otherwise, feel free to unfollow this blog if you know you won't like to see the content I post, that's cool with me.

For the very last time, thank you for coming on this ride with me! It's been an absolute honour. Ben out.